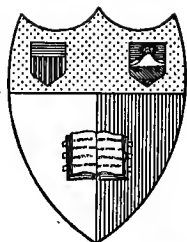




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EVENING TALES

Done into English from the French of
Frédéric Ortoli

BY

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

AUTHOR OF "UNCLE REMUS"

AUTHORIZED EDITION

NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1919

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INTRODUCTION

ONCE upon a time Mr. Wendell P. Garrison, the literary editor of *The Nation*, sent me a picture he had found in a catalogue of French books. It represented a very interesting scene. There were the Tar-Baby and Brother Rabbit as natural as life ; but Brother Fox was missing. His place had been supplied by Brother Billy Goat, whose formidable horns and fierce beard seemed to add to the old episode a new danger for poor Brother Rabbit.

The picture was an advertisement of *Les Contes de la Veillée*, by Frédéric Ortolé. After a while the book itself came to hand, forwarded no doubt by

some thoughtful American tourist who had been interested in the Tar-Baby in French. The volume was examined, and in some sort relished, laid aside for future reference, and then forgotten.

But one night after supper the children of the household were suddenly missing. There was no romping going on in the hall. There were no voices to be heard on the lawn. There was no rippit taking place in the bedrooms. What could the matter be? Had the storm-centre moved in the direction of our innocent neighbors? The silence was so unusual that it created a sudden sense of loneliness.

But the investigation that followed showed that the youngsters had merely made a temporary surrender of their privileges. Their mother was reading to them some of the stories in M. Ortoli's book, and they were listening with an interest

that childhood can neither affect nor disguise. I begged permission to make one of the audience.

“But you have writing to do,” said one of the lads.

“It will disturb you,” said one of the girls.

Nevertheless, the lady, who was and is the centre of this family circle, graciously made room for one more listener; and thus it happens that this little volume of M. Ortoli's stories is in the nature of a family affair. The lady, for the benefit of the intruder, was pleased to go over the stories again, and to read them more slowly, and thus they were put in their present form. Most frequently I have preserved the swift and piquant rendering, the fluent interpretation that fell from the lady's lips.

My apologies are perhaps due to M.

Ortoli for a certain freedom of treatment that has been deemed necessary in some of the stories. I trust this has not been carried too far; but in some instances it has been necessary to English the characters and incidents as well as the text. Nevertheless, an effort has been made to preserve something of the individuality of M. Ortoli, and I think that at least the flavor of it will be found in the stories that follow.

J. C. H.

WEST END, ATLANTA, GA.

EVENING TALES

I

A FRENCH TAR-BABY

IN the time when there were hobgoblins and fairies, Brother Goat and Brother Rabbit lived in the same neighborhood, not far from each other.

Proud of his long beard and sharp horns, Brother Goat looked on Brother Rabbit with disdain. He would hardly speak to Brother Rabbit when he met him, and his greatest pleasure was to make his little neighbor the victim of his tricks and practical jokes. For instance, he would say :

“Brother Rabbit, here is Mr. Fox,” and this would cause Brother Rabbit to run away as hard as he could. Again he would say :

“Brother Rabbit, here is Mr. Wolf,” and poor Brother Rabbit would shake and tremble with fear. Sometimes he would cry out :

“Brother Rabbit, here is Mr. Tiger,” and then Brother Rabbit would shudder and think that his last hour had come.

Tired of this miserable existence, Brother Rabbit tried to think of some means by which he could change his powerful and terrible neighbor into a friend. After a time, he thought he had discovered a way to make Brother Goat his friend, and so he invited him to dinner.

Brother Goat was quick to accept the invitation. The dinner was a fine affair, and there was an abundance of good eat-

ing. A great many different dishes were served. Brother Goat licked his mouth and shook his long beard with satisfaction. He had never before been present at such a feast.

"Well, my friend," exclaimed Brother Rabbit, when the dessert was brought in, "how do you like your dinner?"

"I could certainly wish for nothing better," replied Brother Goat, rubbing the tips of his horns against the back of his chair; "but my throat is very dry and a little water would hurt neither the dinner nor me."

"Gracious!" said Brother Rabbit, "I have neither wine-cellar nor water. I am not in the habit of drinking while I am eating."

"Neither have I any water, Brother Rabbit," said Brother Goat. "But I have an idea! If you will go with me over

yonder by the big poplar, we will dig a well."

"No, Brother Goat," said Brother Rabbit, who hoped to revenge himself—"no, I do not care to dig a well. At daybreak I drink the dew from the cups of the flowers, and in the heat of the day I milk the cows and drink the cream."

"Well and good," said Brother Goat. "Alone I will dig the well, and alone I will drink out of it."

"Success to you, Brother Goat," said Brother Rabbit.

"Thank you kindly, Brother Rabbit."

Brother Goat then went to the foot of the big poplar and began to dig his well. He dug with his forefeet and with his horns, and the well got deeper and deeper. Soon the water began to bubble up and the well was finished, and then Brother Goat made haste to quench his thirst. He

was in such a hurry that his beard got in the water, but he drank and drank until he had his fill.

Brother Rabbit, who had followed him at a little distance, hid himself behind a bush and laughed heartily. He said to himself: "What an innocent creature you are!"

The next day, when Brother Goat, with his big beard and sharp horns, returned to his well to get some water, he saw the tracks of Brother Rabbit in the soft earth. This put him to thinking. He sat down, pulled his beard, scratched his head, and tapped himself on the forehead.

"My friend," he exclaimed after a while, "I will catch you yet."

Then he ran and got his tools (for Brother Goat was something of a carpenter in those days) and made a large doll out of laurel wood. When the doll was

finished, he spread tar on it here and there, on the right and on the left, and up and down. He smeared it all over with the sticky stuff, until it was as black as a Guinea negro.

This finished, Brother Goat waited quietly until evening. At sunset he placed the tarred doll near the well, and ran and hid himself behind the trees and bushes. The moon had just risen, and the heavens twinkled with millions of little star-torches.

Brother Rabbit, who was waiting in his house, believed that the time had come for him to get some water, so he took his bucket and went to Brother Goat's well. On the way he was very much afraid that something would catch him. He trembled when the wind shook the leaves of the trees. He would go a little distance and then stop and listen; he hid here behind a stone, and there behind a tuft of grass.

At last he arrived at the well, and there he saw the little negro. He stopped and looked at it with astonishment. Then he drew back a little way, advanced again, drew back, advanced a little, and stopped once more.

“What can that be?” he said to himself. He listened, with his long ears pointed forward, but the trees could not talk, and the bushes were dumb. He winked his eyes and lowered his head :

“Hey, friend ! who are you ?” he asked.

The tar-doll didn’t move. Brother Rabbit went up a little closer, and asked again :

“Who are you ?”

The tar-doll said nothing. Brother Rabbit breathed more at ease. Then he went to the brink of the well, but when he looked in the water the tar-doll seemed to look in too. He could see her reflection

in the water. This made Brother Rabbit so mad that he grew red in the face.

“See here!” he exclaimed, “if you look in this well I’ll give you a rap on the nose!”

Brother Rabbit leaned over the brink of the well, and saw the tar-doll smiling at him in the water. He raised his right hand and hit her — bam! His hand stuck.

“What’s this?” exclaimed Brother Rabbit. “Turn me loose, imp of Satan! If you do not, I will rap you on the eye with my other hand.”

Then he hit her—bim! The left hand stuck also. Then Brother Rabbit raised his right foot, saying :

“Mark me well, little Congo! Do you see this foot? I will kick you in the stomach if you do not turn me loose this instant.”

No sooner said than done. Brother Rabbit let fly his right foot—vip! The foot stuck, and he raised the other.

“Do you see this foot?” he exclaimed. “If I hit you with it, you will think a thunderbolt has struck you.”

Then he kicked her with the left foot, and it also stuck like the other, and Brother Rabbit held fast his Guinea negro.

“Watch out, now!” he cried. “I’ve already butted a great many people with my head. If I butt you in your ugly face I’ll knock it into a jelly. Turn me loose! Oho! you don’t answer?” Bap!

“Guinea girl!” exclaimed Brother Rabbit, “are you dead? Gracious goodness! how my head does stick!”

When the sun rose, Brother Goat went to his well to find out something about Brother Rabbit. The result was beyond his expectations.

"Hey, little rogue, big rogue!" exclaimed Brother Goat. "Hey, Brother Rabbit! what are you doing there? I thought you drank the dew from the cups of the flowers, or milk from the cows. Aha, Brother Rabbit! I will punish you for stealing my water."

"I am your friend," said Brother Rabbit; "don't kill me."

"Thief, thief!" cried Brother Goat, and then he ran quickly into the woods, gathered up a pile of dry limbs, and made a great fire. He took Brother Rabbit from the tar-doll, and prepared to burn him alive. As he was passing a thicket of brambles with Brother Rabbit on his shoulders, Brother Goat met his daughter Bélédie, who was walking about in the fields.

"Where are you going, papa, muffled up with such a burden? Come and eat

the fresh grass with me, and throw wicked Brother Rabbit in the brambles."

Cunning Brother Rabbit raised his long ears and pretended to be very much frightened.

"Oh, no, Brother Goat!" he cried. "Don't throw me in the brambles. They will tear my flesh, put out my eyes, and pierce my heart. Oh, I pray you, rather throw me in the fire."

"Aha, little rogue, big rogue! Aha, Brother Rabbit!" exclaimed Brother Goat, exultingly, "you don't like the brambles? Well, then, go and laugh in them," and he threw Brother Rabbit in without a feeling of pity.

Brother Rabbit fell in the brambles, leaped to his feet, and began to laugh.

"Ha-ha-ha! Brother Goat, what a simpleton you are!—ha-ha-ha! A better bed

I never had ! In these brambles I was born ! ”

Brother Goat was in despair, but he could not help himself. Brother Rabbit was safe.

A long beard is not always a sign of intelligence.

II

TEENCHY DUCK

ONCE upon a time there lived in a village in some country (I do not know where, but certainly nowhere near here), an old man and an old woman who were very poor indeed. They had never been able to save a single penny. They had no farm, not even a garden. They had nothing but a little Duck that walked around on her two feet every day, singing the song of famine. "Quack ! quack ! Who will give me a piece of bread ? Quack ! quack ! Who will give me a piece of bread ?" This little Duck was so small that she was named Teenchy Duck.

It so happened one day that Teenchy

Duck was paddling in the water near the river's edge when she saw a fine purse filled with gold. At once she began to flap her wings and cry : " Quack ! quack ! Who has lost his beautiful money ? Quack ! quack ! Who has lost his beautiful money ? "

Just at that moment the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows passed along the road. He was richer than all the kings and emperors, but he was mean and miserly. He walked along with a stick in his hand, and as he walked he counted in his mind the millions that he had stored away in his strong-box.

" Quack ! quack ! Who lost his beautiful money ? Quack ! quack ! Who lost his beautiful money ? " cried Teenchy Duck.

" I have lost it," brazenly exclaimed the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows, and

then he seized the purse full of money that Teenchy Duck held in her bill, and went on his way.

The poor Puddle Duck was so astonished at this that she could scarcely stand on her feet.

“Well, well!” she exclaimed, “that rich lord has kept all for himself and given me nothing. May he be destroyed by a pestilence!”

Teenchy Duck at once ran to her master, and told him what had happened. When her master learned the value of what Teenchy Duck had found, and the trick that had been played on her by the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows, he went into a violent rage.

“Why, you big simpleton!” he exclaimed, “you find money and you do not bring it to us? You give it to a big lord, who did not lose it, when we poor people

need it, so much. Go out of this house instantly, and don't dare to come back until you have brought me the purse of gold !”

Unfortunate Teenchy Duck trembled in all her limbs, and made herself small and humble ; but she found voice to say :

“You are right, my master ! I go at once to find the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows.”

But once out of doors the poor Puddle Duck thought to herself sorrowfully : “How and where can I find the Prince who was so mean as to steal the beautiful money ?”

Teenchy Duck was so bewildered that she began to strike her head against the rocks in despair. Suddenly an idea came into her mind. She would follow his tracks, and the marks that his walking-stick made in the ground until she came

to the castle of the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows.

No sooner thought than done. Teenchy Duck went waddling down the road in the direction taken by the miserly Prince, crying, with all her might :

“Quack ! quack ! Give me back my beautiful money ! Quack ! quack ! Give me back my beautiful money !”

Brother Fox, who was taking his ease a little way from the road, heard Teenchy Duck's cries, and knew her voice. He went to her and said :

“What in the world is the matter with you, my poor Teenchy Duck ? You look sad and broken-hearted.”

“I have good reason to be,” said Teenchy Duck. “This morning, while paddling in the river, I found a purse full of gold, and gave it to the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows, thinking it was

his. But now, here comes my master and asks me for it, and says he will kill me if I do not bring it to him pretty soon."

"Well, where are you going in this style?" asked Brother Fox.

"I am going straight to the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows," said Teenchy Duck.

"Shall I go with you?" asked Brother Fox.

"I'd be only too glad if you would," exclaimed Teenchy Duck.

"But how can I go?" said Brother Fox.

"Get in my satchel," said Teenchy Duck, "and I'll carry you the best I know how."

"It isn't big enough," said Brother Fox.

"It will stretch," said Teenchy Duck. So Brother Fox got in the satchel, and

Teenchy Duck went waddling along the road, crying: "Quack! quack! Give me back my beautiful money!"

She had not gone far when she met Brother Wolf, who was passing that way.

"What are you crying so for?" he inquired. "One would think you were going to die on the journey."

"It is only too true," said Teenchy Duck, and then she told Brother Wolf about finding the money-purse, just as she had told Brother Fox.

"Perhaps I can be of some service to you," said Brother Wolf. "Shall I go with you?"

"I am willing," said Teenchy Duck.

"But how can I go so far?" Brother Wolf asked.

"Get in my satchel," said Teenchy Duck, "and I'll carry you as I can."

"It is too small," said Brother Wolf.

"It will stretch mightily," said Teenchy Duck.

Then Brother Wolf went to keep company with Brother Fox.

Teenchy Duck went on her way again. She didn't walk very fast, for her satchel was heavy; but she never ceased crying: "Quack! quack! Give me back my beautiful money."

Now it happened, as she was going along, she came up with a Ladder, which said, without asking after her health:

"My poor Teenchy Duck! You do not seem to be very happy."

"I should think not!" exclaimed Teenchy Duck.

"What can the matter be?" the Ladder asked.

Teenchy Duck then told her story over again.

"I am not doing anything at pres-

ent," said the Ladder; "shall I go with you?"

"Yes," said Teenchy Duck.

"But how can I go, I who never walk?" inquired the Ladder.

"Why, get in my satchel," said Teenchy Duck, "and I'll carry you the best I know how."

The Ladder was soon in the satchel with Brother Fox and Brother Wolf, and Teenchy Duck went on her way, following the tracks of the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows, and always crying:

"Quack! quack! Give me back my beautiful money!"

Going along and crying thus, Teenchy Duck came to her best and oldest friend, the River.

"What are you doing here?" said the River, in astonishment, "and why are you crying so? When I saw you this

morning you seemed to be very happy."

"Ah!" said Teenchy Duck, "would you believe it? I have not eaten since yesterday."

"And why not?" asked the sympathetic River.

"You saw me find the purse of gold," said Teenchy Duck, "and you saw the Prince seize it. Ah, well! my master will kill me if I do not get it and return it to him."

"Sometimes," the River replied, "a little help does a great deal of good. Shall I go with you?"

"I should be very happy," said Teenchy Duck.

"But how can I follow you—I that have no limbs?" said the River.

"Get in my satchel," said Teenchy Duck. "I'll carry you as I can."

Then the River got in the satchel by the side of the other friends of Teenchy Duck.

She went on her journey, keeping her eyes on the ground, so as not to lose sight of the tracks of the thief, but still crying for her beautiful money. On her way she came to a Bee-Hive, which had a mind to laugh because Teenchy Duck was carrying such a burden.

"Hey, my poor Teenchy Duck! What a big, fat satchel you have there!" said the Bee-Hive.

"I'm not in the humor for joking, my dear," said Teenchy Duck.

"Why are you so sad?"

"I have been very unfortunate, good little people," said Teenchy Duck, addressing herself to the Bees, and then she told her story.

"Shall we go with you?" asked the Bees.

“Yes, yes!” exclaimed Teenchy Duck. “In these days of sorrow I stand in need of friends.”

“How shall we follow you?” asked the Bees.

“Get in my satchel,” said Teenchy Duck. “I’ll carry you the best I know how.”

Then the Bees shook their wings for joy and swarmed into the satchel along with the other friends of Teenchy Duck.

She resumed her journey, always crying for the return of her beautiful money. She walked and walked without stopping to rest a moment, until her legs almost refused to carry her. At last, just as night was coming on, Teenchy Duck saw with joy that the tracks of the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows stopped at the iron gate that barred the way to a splendid castle.

“Ah!” she exclaimed, “I have arrived at my journey’s end, and I have no need to knock on the gate. I will creep under.”

Teenchy Duck entered the grounds and cried out: “Quack! quack! Give me my beautiful money!”

The Prince heard her and laughed scornfully. How could a poor Teenchy Duck compel a great lord to return the purse of gold?

Teenchy Duck continued to cry:

“Quack! quack! Give me back my beautiful money!”

It was night, and the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows ordered one of his servants to take Teenchy Duck and shut her up in the hennery with the turkeys, the geese, and the chickens, thinking that these fowls would kill the stranger, and that her disagreeable song would forever be at an end.

This order was immediately carried out by the servant, but no sooner had Teenchy Duck entered the hennery than she exclaimed :

“Brother Fox, if you do not come to my assistance I am lost !”

Brother Fox came out of the satchel promptly, and worked so well at his trade that of all the fowls he found there not one remained alive.

At break of day the servant-girl, whose business it was to attend to the poultry-yard, opened the door of the hennery, and was astounded to see Teenchy Duck come out, singing the same old song :

“Quack ! quack ! Give me back my beautiful money !”

The astonished girl immediately ran and told her master, the Prince, what had happened, and the wife of the Prince, who

had at that moment learned all, said to her husband :

“This Duck is a Witch. Give her the money, or it will bring us bad luck.”

The Prince of the Seven Golden Cows refused to listen to any advice. He believed that the fox had only happened to enter his hennery by accident.

Teenchy Duck made herself heard all day, and at night the Prince said to his servants :

“Take this squaller and throw her in the stable under the feet of the mules and horses. We will see in the morning what she will say.”

The servants obeyed, and Teenchy Duck immediately cried :

“Brother Wolf, if you do not come quickly to my aid I shall be killed.”

Brother Wolf made no delay, and it was not long before he had destroyed the

horses and the mules. Next morning, before day, the servants went to get the animals to put them to the ploughs and wagons; but when they saw them lying dead their astonishment was indescribable. In the stable Teenchy Duck stood alone, singing, in her most beautiful voice :

“Quack ! quack ! Give me back my beautiful money !”

When the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows heard of this disaster he became white with rage, and in his fury he wanted to give his servants a thousand lashes for not having taken necessary precautions against the Wolf. But his wife calmed him little by little, saying :

“My husband, give back to Teenchy Duck this purse you have taken, or else we shall be ruined.”

“No,” cried the Prince, “she shall never have it !”

All this time Teenchy Duck was promenading up and down, to the right and to the left, singing, at the top of her voice :

“Quack ! quack ! Give me back my beautiful money !”

“Heavens !” said the Prince, stopping his ears, “I am tired of hearing this ugly fowl squall and squawk. Quick ! throw her in the well or the furnace, so that we may be rid of her.”

“What shall we do first ?” the servants asked.

“It matters not,” said the Prince, “so long as we are rid of her.”

The servants took Teenchy Duck and threw her in the well, thinking this the easiest and the quickest way to dispose of her.

As Teenchy Duck was falling, she cried :
“Come to my assistance, good Ladder, or I am undone.”

The Ladder immediately came out of the satchel, and leaned against the walls of the well. Teenchy Duck came up the rounds, singing :

“Quack, quack ! Give me back my beautiful money !”

Everybody was astonished, and the Prince’s wife kept saying : “Give this witch her money.”

“They would say that I am afraid of a Teenchy Duck,” said the Prince of the Seven Golden Cows. “I will never give it up.” Then, speaking to his servants, he said : “Heat the oven ; heat it to a white heat, and throw this witch in.”

The servants were compelled to obey, but they were so frightened that none dared touch her. At last, one bolder than the rest seized her by the end of the wing and threw her in the red-hot oven. Everybody thought that this was the end of

Teenchy Duck, but she had had time to cry out :

“Oh, my dear friend River, come to my assistance, or I shall be roasted.”

The River rushed out and quenched the fire and cooled the oven.

When the Prince went to see what was left of Teenchy Duck, she met him, and began to repeat her familiar refrain :

“Quack, quack ! Give me back my beautiful money !”

The Prince of the Seven Golden Cows was furious.

“You are all blockheads !” he cried to his servants. “You never knew how to do anything. Get out of here ! I will drive you off the place ! Hereafter I will take charge of this fiend myself.”

That night, before retiring, the Prince and his wife went and got Teenchy Duck, and prepared to give her such a beating

as they had no doubt would cause her death.

Fortunately, Teenchy Duck saw the danger and cried out :

“Friend Bees ! come out and help me.”

A buzzing sound was heard, and then the Bees swarmed on the Prince and his wife, and stung them so terribly that they became frightful to behold.

“Return the money to this ugly witch,” groaned the unfortunate wife. “Run, or we are done for.”

The Prince did not wait to be told twice. He ran and got the purse full of gold, and returned it to Teenchy Duck.

“Here,” said he, “I am conquered. But get out of my grounds quickly.”

Full of joy, Teenchy Duck went out into the road singing : “Quack, quack ! I have got my beautiful money ! Quack, quack ! Here is my beautiful money !”

On her way home she returned the friends that had aided her to the places where she had found them, thanking them kindly for their assistance in time of need.

At break of day Teenchy Duck found herself at her master's door. She aroused him by her loud cries. After that, the family was rich, but the master and mistress were not happy, for they knew the money did not belong to them.

Teenchy Duck was well taken care of, and grew to be large and fat. If she went to the village pond at all, it was only to take a bath with her comrades and to tell a certain Duck of her remarkable exploit of recovering the beautiful money.

III

MR. SNAIL AND BROTHER WOLF

ONE night, in the season when the hawthorn flowers were blooming and perfuming the air, Brother Wolf came out of the woods, and ran down the hill in a brisk gallop. A little Snail saw Brother Wolf—a little Snail, who, to accommodate himself, carried his house on his back and his horns on his head. He was a very funny little Snail; and, as Brother Wolf was passing, he laughed aloud—

“Ha, ha, ha! He, he, he!”

Hearing this, Brother Wolf paused, turned around, and said:

“Why do you laugh, little Snail?”

"Why do I laugh?" exclaimed Mr. Snail.

"Yes," said Brother Wolf. "Do you see anything ridiculous about me?"

"No, Brother Wolf," said Mr. Snail; "on the contrary, you make a very fine appearance. You have on your Sunday clothes, and you are handsome indeed. No, Brother Wolf, you are not at all ridiculous."

"Why, then, this laughter?" inquired Brother Wolf. "Answer me at once, for I am in a hurry. Speak this instant, or it will not be well for you."

"Do not get angry, Brother Wolf; it is not worth while. I only laughed to see you running so fast when neither dogs nor men were pursuing you. Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"I am going to the city," said Brother Wolf.

"To the city?" exclaimed Mr. Snail.
"What do you propose to do there?"

"I want to see my brother, who is sick in the menagerie. He has written me to come to him."

"That is very queer," said Mr. Snail.
"I am going to the city also."

"Bosh!" exclaimed Brother Wolf, contemptuously. "Hens will have teeth and sows side-pockets before you get there."

Mr. Snail felt himself somewhat insulted at Brother Wolf's remark, and replied :

"I do not know how long it takes a hen to have teeth; but one thing I do know, and that is, that I will arrive in the city before you do."

"You have no legs, and you carry your house on your back," said Brother Wolf; "how will you manage to get there?"

"Don't trouble about that," said Mr.

Snail. "My house is mine, and I do not need legs. I will be in the city before you."

"You make me very tired with your talk," said Brother Wolf. "If you are not joking, let us wager a breakfast that you do not get there first—that is, if you are not joking."

"Very well, then," said Mr. Snail, "let it be a breakfast. I even give you three jumps in advance, and after that you may gallop."

While Brother Wolf was making ready for the start, Mr. Snail crawled up on his tail. When the signal was given, the Wolf hurried on, going very rapidly and without a moment's rest. He arrived in the city the next day; but found the gates closed. Brother Wolf knocked very hard, and waited for some one to come and admit him.

During this time Mr. Snail dropped on the ground and climbed on the wall.

“Is that you, my friend?” he exclaimed. “I have been waiting for you a long time. I am hungry now, and want my breakfast.”

IV

THE LION'S SECRET

ONCE upon a time there were two brothers, who were orphans. The oldest was named Mahobane and the youngest Lovallec. These unfortunate children had been beggars since they were six years of age. They went from house to house and from village to village, on mountains and in valleys, but wherever they went their cry was the same :

“Good friends! give us alms! Kind friends! help the unfortunate!”

Their lot was a hard one, even as children, but it was harder as they grew older, for when the oldest was twenty they discovered that they had only succeeded, after

all their efforts, in keeping soul and body together. Finally, one day, Mahobane exclaimed :

“I know what I shall do to make a great deal of money in a very short time.”

“What is it ?” cried Lovallec.

“One of us,” said the eldest, “will have to become blind and lead the other by the hand, going from house to house and along the public highways asking for alms from the people and from the travellers.”

“You are right,” said Lovallec, “but, alas ! neither one of us is blind.”

“It will be easy enough,” said the other, “to become so.”

“How can that be ?” asked Lovallec.

“Oh, easy enough,” said the elder. “One of us will have to put out his eyes.”

“Oh, no !” exclaimed the younger ; “that would make one of us suffer too much.”

"Ah," said Mahobane, to the younger, "you are timid, you are tender-hearted : What is a little suffering in comparison with the happy times we should have ? the soft beds we should sleep in, the fine meats that will be offered us, and the good wines we have not tasted in so long ? But it does not follow that you are to be blind," continued Mahobane ; "the lot may fall to me instead of you."

"So be it," said the younger ; "let us draw straws."

Mahobane prepared the straws, and arranged very cleverly to cheat his younger brother. He had no sooner carried his point than he put out his brother's eyes with a thorn.

Lovallec screamed loudly under the pain of this operation, but the only sympathy he got from his cruel brother was this :

“Cry louder, my brother! cry louder! for here the people are passing, and when they behold your condition they will give us money.”

It was even so. Silver and pennies fell into the wooden bowl they carried, and this success was continued for more than a year. Then a wicked thought entered the head of Mahobane, the eldest, and he made up his mind to get rid of his unfortunate brother. So one day he carried him into the great forest and left him to wander alone and find his way out as best he could; but, being blind, this he was unable to do.

“Where am I, my dear brother? Where are you?” But there was no answer to his heart-rending cries. The cowardly brother, who had deserted him, was already far away. It was long before Lovallec, the blind one, would believe that

his brother could be cruel enough to desert him. He called and cried for the absent brother, but the only answer he heard was in the mocking echoes. Night came, and he was tired, hungry, and thirsty. Despair seized him and he continued his lamentations.

“Ah, my brother! my brother! how cruel you have been to forsake me! Is it my fate to die of hunger at the foot of this tree, or become the prey of the ravenous beasts that roam through this forest? No! Better a thousand times that I should die at once.”

With this the unfortunate brother climbed the tree, at the foot of which he found himself, groping his way up the trunk, and was preparing to throw himself to the ground to end his existence then and there, when he heard in the forest, near at hand, the terrible roaring of a lion.

At this sound the leaves and branches of the tree trembled, and the blind unfortunate paused. The roaring of the Lion, as it seemed, was a call to the Wolf, who soon made his appearance at the foot of the tree.

“You are late, Wolf!” exclaimed the Lion; “where do you come from?”

“I have been at Offemborough,” said the Wolf, “where I have tasted human flesh. There everyone is dying of thirst, and the people are too weak to protect themselves. That is why I am late.” At this the Lion laughed heartily.

“I know,” said he, “how water can be procured for the inhabitants of this city.”

“But how can this be done?” the Wolf inquired.

“It is easy enough,” said the Lion, in his positive way; “take a small piece of the root of this very tree under which we are

standing, and strike three times on the rock in the middle of the city, saying :

“ ‘ Come, gentle Dew, from the skies,
Refreshing Fountains rise,
Oh, Rivers ! greet men's eyes ! ’

and immediately water, fresh and clear as crystal will flow, and it will flow in sufficient abundance to satisfy the needs of all.”

“ You are wise,” said the Wolf. “ Can you not give me some other useful information ? ”

“ Yes,” said the lion, “ I can tell you a remedy that will cure all sorts of maladies and infirmities.”

“ What is that ? ” said the Wolf.

“ To succeed in the art of medicine,” said the Lion, shaking his mane and beard, “ one has only to take the inner bark of this same tree, and apply it to the seat of

the disease. For example, if one is blind, a portion of the inner bark of the tree would have to be applied to the eyes."

"That is very strange," said the Wolf, "and I will remember it. But now tell me from whence you come: I have not seen you for many days."

"I have just arrived from the city of the famous King, whose beautiful daughter now lies dangerously ill."

"And how did the famous King's beautiful daughter come to be ill?" inquired the Wolf.

"Well," said the Lion, "as I was passing over the mountain of Aventin, I met the King's daughter riding on a palfrey. She was smiling on all, and giving alms to every unfortunate she met. She was so beautiful, with her great blue eyes, and so simple and so good, that it made me lonely and lovesick, so I caused to be sent her a

terrible malady which will consume her, and to-day she should be dying."

"Do you think," said the Wolf, "that the inner bark of this tree would cure the sick princess?"

"No," said the Lion. "It would not be sufficient in this case, for the princess has an evil spirit for an enemy, and she will have to be treated differently. To be cured, she must be given the blood of a frog mixed with muscadine wine, and the second day she must eat the frog's heart cooked in the juice of a fig."

Here the Lion paused, and the Wolf inquired :

"Have you no more good news for me, good friend?"

"No," said the Lion.

"Then good-by until next year," said the Wolf, "when we will meet at the same time and place."

The Wolf and the Lion parted, each going his way through the forest.

“So, then,” exclaimed Lovallec, the blind man, who had been sitting in the tree, “I have not been deserted by Providence after all. These beasts have told me secrets that will surely be useful to me hereafter.”

The sun had arisen, and the birds began to sing. Lovallec came down from the tree and took a piece of the inner bark thereof and rubbed it on his eyes. Suddenly he found that his eyesight had been restored to him, and the happy man danced around in a transport of joy. He saw the skies, the birds, the flowers, and, above all, the sun. He was happy once more. He placed the bark in his bosom and pressed it there, after securing a quantity of the precious medicine. He did not forget, also, to procure a piece of the root of

the tree, in order that he might be able to give water to the unfortunate inhabitants of Offemborough.

After making these preparations the young man started on his journey. He travelled for many days and crossed many rivers. He was nearly at the end of his journey, but he was as poor now as when he started, and his clothes were in tatters. He had no money, but his riches were all in his heart. He met a priest.

"Good-morning, parson," said he ; " can I enjoy your hospitality ? "

"No," said the priest, "my house is too small and I have no place for you."

He met the mayor.

"Good-day, Mr. Mayor," Lovallec exclaimed, "will you give me something to eat ? "

"Go away, you tramp, or I will have you arrested this instant," cried the mayor.

He met the lord of the castle.

“Good-day,” said the traveller. “I am cold, your lordship; can you give me some clothing to wear—something to hide my nakedness?”

Then the lord of the castle called to his servants and directed them to give the beggar a hundred lashes, and the unfortunate young man was beat and left for dead on the way.

A poor girl, passing by, saw him lying on the ground, and bent over him tenderly. Then she called assistance, and had him carried to her home, where she watched over him constantly, weeping and praying that he might recover.

At last Lovallec recovered, and said to the young girl who had rescued him :

“My guardian angel, what has happened since I have been ill? What is the news in the city?”

"There is nothing new," said the young girl. "Every one is the victim of the water-famine."

"What a misfortune!" cried the young man; "let us go at once to the relief of these poor people!"

Although Lovallec was scarcely able to walk, he leaned on the arm of the young girl, and was preparing to go, when, all of a sudden, he remembered the pieces of bark he had secreted in his bosom. He took a portion of this, rubbed himself, and at once the pains in his limbs disappeared, and he was made whole again.

The young girl was astonished at this sudden change, as well she might be, and her surprise continued until they had arrived in the centre of the great city. Once there, however, the young man recognized the rock that had been described by the Lion. Without loss of time he

took the piece of the root of the tree that he had procured, and struck the rock three times, crying :

“ Come, gentle Dew, from the skies,
Refreshing Fountains rise,
Oh, Rivers ! greet men’s eyes ! ”

At once there was a mysterious noise in the rock. It parted in twain, and the water gushed forth in an abundant supply. The news of this miracle spread abroad in the city, and the inhabitants came with their jugs and vessels to obtain a supply of water. All quenched their thirst, and were happy ; they embraced each other and made ready for celebrating the event with festivities. They were so grateful that they could talk of nothing else but the miracle that had given them an abundance of water.

But in the midst of their congratulations

and rejoicings a voice rose above the tumult :

“ Friends, let us not be ungrateful. To whom do we owe this abundance of water that has given us renewed strength and life ? ”

When Lovallec heard these words he made an effort to escape the notice of the crowd, but the young girl could not resist a desire to make him known to the people. She cried out :

“ Here is the saviour of Offemborough ! ”

At this the young man was surrounded by the priest, the mayor, and the lord of the castle, and they wanted to carry him off in triumph. They offered him great sums of money as a reward for the service he had rendered them ; but simple and modest as the young man was, he answered :

“ No, no ! keep all your money. I will

have none of that. I was without a shelter, and you drove me from your door; I was dying of hunger, and you refused me even the scraps that you fed to your dogs; I was shivering with cold, and all the clothing you gave me was a beating, and I was left for dead on the pavement. Ah! keep your honors; keep your money!"

At these sad words, and, fearing that the young man would destroy the source of their water as quickly as he had discovered it, the men, women, and children fell on their knees before him and begged for mercy. He bade them rise, and he was weeping as he spoke:

"Your kindness is my best revenge."

Then the people asked Lovallec to make his home among them.

"No! no!" he answered, "I have a great deal of good to do as I journey

through the world, and those who are suffering cannot afford to wait."

The people of Offemborough, however, persuaded him to accept a magnificent carriage and horses; they clothed him in fine linen and gave him money to go on his way.

"When will you return to us?" inquired the people.

"Very soon, perhaps, my friends," cried Lovallec, and with that his driver whipped up the horses, and the young man was soon lost to view.

After so long a time, Lovallec, arriving at the city of the famous King, went immediately to the palace-door and knocked.

"What will you have?" said the King, who went to the door.

"Living in a far-off country I heard that your daughter is sick, and I have come to cure her."

"Alas!" cried the King, "you have

come in vain. All the great physicians of the world have exhausted their science in her behalf, and I am in despair."

"You must have courage," said the young man; "your daughter will be cured in a few days."

"Stranger," said the famous monarch, "if you can work such a wonderful miracle as this, all that I have is yours. The riches that will fall to you will be beyond computation. You shall have millions of gold pieces, a hundred towns and ten provinces shall be yours, and you may even command my crown if you succeed in curing my daughter."

Then Lovallec thanked the famous King and said :

"Leave me alone a little while, as it is necessary that I should gather some herbs that belong to the medicine which I desire to give your daughter."

Then the famous King went weeping to his daughter's bedside. The young man went down into the garden and caught a frog, and went to the apartments that had been provided for him.

"Quick!" he exclaimed to one of the servants, "bring me a knife and a plate and some green figs; and you," he said to another, "make a big fire, and don't forget to fetch a frying-pan."

Everything was ready in a short time, and Lovallec went to work, having first made sure that there was nobody near to watch him. He first killed the frog and mixed its blood with muscadine wine. Then he took out the heart, and cooked it as the Lion had said. This mixture prepared, the young man went before the King's daughter.

"Powerful princess!" he exclaimed,

"drink of this wine, for it is renewed life that I give you."

The princess drank one swallow, and immediately pushed the cup from her.

"I am poisoned!" she cried; "I feel that I am dying."

"Drink, princess, drink!" exclaimed the young man, "for it is an evil spirit that possesses you."

Then the young girl took the rest of the draught, and was immediately relieved.

"Ah! I am better," she exclaimed. "I feel my strength returning. Thanks! thanks! my benefactor!"

The next day Lovallec presented her with the heart of the frog, cooked according to the Lion's directions.

"Eat this meat," the young man said, "and all your troubles will be over."

Then the sick girl ate bravely of the

queer morsel, and was immediately restored to health.

"My father! my father!" she cried, "here is your daughter who is restored to you. See my bright eyes and my rosy cheeks." Then she laughed and sang, and with a smile she again thanked her benefactor.

The old King was nearly crazed with joy, and more than once he went to the young man and embraced him; but that seemed insufficient as an expression of the gratitude that he owed the doctor, and he was loaded with presents of all sorts. He had caskets of gold, precious stones, villages and castles, and more riches than he could wish for. One day the King said to him :

"My son, I want to give you my daughter's hand in marriage, and my crown, if you will accept it."

"Your Majesty," said Lovallec, "permit me to think over your proposition. I desire to return to a foreign country to arrange my affairs, and later I can give you an answer."

"Go, my son," said the King, "but return quickly. The hours seem long to those who love and wait."

The young man went away that very day. Where he was going he alone knew, but his horses seemed to know where his heart turned, and he soon found himself on the way to Offemborough, where one poor woman had had pity on him. It was not long before he had reached the end of his journey. He stopped at the best hotel and had a magnificent dinner set before him. After dining he said to the landlord :

"My friend, what is new in the city?"

"Nothing," said the landlord, "except

that the marvellous palace, built for the saviour of this city has been completed."

"What is his name?" inquired Lovallec.

"Alas! no one knows," said the landlord. "He was merely passing through this land to a foreign country, where he had other good deeds to perform. When he returns we hope to have him remain with us, and it is our purpose to give him the most beautiful woman of the country for his bride."

"Good-night, good-night," said Lovallec, with a smile, and went to bed.

But the news of his arrival spread through the village, and on all sides the grateful people came to see him and congratulate him. The mayor of the town called on him, made a beautiful speech, and invited him to take possession of the marvellous palace.

"What will I do with it?" asked Lovallec. "I am alone and have no family."

"Then get you a wife," said the mayor.

"You are right," said Lovallec. "Tomorrow I will choose me a wife from the beautiful girls of this village."

The next day the maidens were gathered on the lawn before the church. The young man inspected them carefully, but he could not find among them the girl who had befriended him, and for whom he was searching.

The day after, the working-girls were ranged on the lawn, and among these, the simplest and the most beautiful, he found the maiden who had given him aid in the hour of need. This maiden he selected to be his wife in preference to the princess in the far country.

He married her and was living happily, when one day a beggar, clothed in rags,

made his appearance at the castle-door and asked for alms.

"You seem to have seen trouble," Lovallec said.

"Yes," said the beggar, "and I have deserved it all."

With that he went on to relate, amid tears and sobs, how, many years before, he had robbed a brother of his eyesight. Lovallec had already recognized him, but he permitted the poor man to tell his story, and then made himself known. And after that they both lived happily together in the palace which the gratitude of the people had provided.

V

THE KING AND THE LAPWINGS

One day the great King of the Magicians and Sorcerers was leaving his country to visit a neighboring Queen. He was leaning on his walking-stick, having been travelling since the break of day, when the sun rose and spread his beneficent rays over all nature. The birds sang blithely, and the little crickets in the grass made themselves noisy ; but the King, while enjoying the scene and the sounds around him, went forward without delay. The sun shone brightly, the birds were joyous, and all nature seemed to be happy, but the King suffered from fatigue. Great beads of perspiration broke out on his forehead,

and he longed for a cloud that would give shade and coolness. The earth seemed to be a furnace. The sun spread its great rays of light and the cloud came not. The King begged for a clump of woods that he might have the benefit of shade, and for a stream of cool and sparkling water that he might quench his thirst. The road was long and dusty, and the wells were dry.

But in the air, far away, appeared the King of the Lapwings. He bore in his beak a draught of water, and his wings were dripping wet. Faster than the wind he made his way to the dying King.

"Ah," said the bird, "it was indeed time that I came;" and with the end of his wing, as tenderly as would a mother, he washed the face of the unfortunate King, and placed between his lips the water he held

in his beak. The King revived and opened his eyes.

“Ah, thou,” he exclaimed, “who gave me back my life ! I am hereafter under all obligations to you.”

“Wait a moment, your majesty,” said the King of the Lapwings ; “thirst still devours you, but have hope. Behold in the distance my faithful subjects, who come forth, each one carrying at the end of its wings the delightful refreshment you have longed for.”

The lapwings arrived on all sides. Each one deposited in the mouth of the unfortunate King the fresh water for which he thirsted.

“Ah, this is better than bread,” said the King, reviving ; “what can I do to show my gratitude ?”

“Nothing,” said the King of the Lapwings. “Nothing,” responded the other

birds. "Continue your journey, and you will find yourself hereafter under the shadow of our wings."

Then the King resumed his journey. Night came, and he found himself near the palace of the Queen whom he had intended to visit. The lapwings still continued with him. No matter how bright the sun shone, no matter how suffocating the heat as he journeyed on, a gentle lapwing came to his assistance. Touched by the solicitude of these birds the King said :

"I cannot leave you, my friends, you who had pity on me when I was forsaken by all, without giving you a substantial evidence of my gratitude. Tell me, what can I do for you? How can I show you how grateful I am?"

At these words the King of the Lapwings advanced and spoke to the King :

“We desire, your majesty, to be the most beautiful of birds. We want a golden crown on our heads, so that we may be placed before the peacock, who is so proud of his plumage, and before the gay nightingale, who is so proud of his song.”

At these words a great sadness filled the heart of the King, who could read the future, and he responded, shaking his head :

“Ah ! you foolish birds, larger of heart than of mind ! you do not know the weight of a crown and of the numberless dangers to which it exposes those who possess it. A golden diadem, say you ? Alas ! it will bring you misfortune ; ambition without bounds is wicked and perilous. Dear friends, demand of me something else.”

“No, no,” cried the lapwings, on all sides, young and old, little and big, “that

is the only gift we desire—a crown on our heads. Ah, what happiness! We will fly in the air and each bird will envy us.”

The King then saw that nothing he could say would convince his companions. He had promised to satisfy their first request, and his word was sacred.

“Come with me,” said he, “to my friend, the magician Zacchar. No one is more expert in the working of metal. At his touch iron becomes more supple, silver becomes malleable, and gold is mere paste. Come! and you shall have the diadem you long for.”

During three days the magician worked pure gold. The bellows blew and the hammers thumped. During three nights he chased the marvellous crowns that were to adorn the heads of the lapwings. At the dawn of the fourth day the King arrived, with a sad smile on his face.

“Friends,” said he to the birds, “my promise is fulfilled. Take these diadems; take these diadems, which are masterpieces of art, and go whither your destiny calls you.”

At these words the lapwings uttered loud cries of joy.

“Go, go,” cried the King, “escape from man or you are lost.”

Without understanding his warning, but obeying the command of the powerful King, the lapwings took flight, filled with joy and happiness. They went here and there, flying to the tops of the mountains and descending to the depths of the valleys, telling of their good fortune to all their friends both far and wide.

When the other birds saw the crowns with which the heads of the lapwings were encircled they paid due homage to the symbols. Whenever there was a feast or

an important funeral the lapwings and their friends walked in the place of honor, before the eagles and the peafowls, leaving far behind them the humming-bird (that living flower), the linnet, and the nightingale.

But, unfortunately, it happened one day that a lapwing came too near the abode of man, and a hunter saw it and killed it.

“What is this?” exclaimed the sportsman, perceiving the golden crown. Seizing it, he ran quickly to the jeweller’s.

“Worker in metals!” said he, “see this marvellous diadem the lapwing carries! Of what metal is it made?”

The jeweller took the crown, turned it on all sides, and looking at it with greedy eyes, exclaimed:

“It is of pure gold, and if you will part with it I will pay you an hundred shekels.”

When the other sportsmen found out the value of the ornament that the lapwings wore on their heads, they made haste to go into the country, and they pursued the lapwings, wherever they could find them. New weapons were invented, and the hunters watched day and night, killing all the lapwings that were so unfortunate as to appear in sight.

“Lord, have mercy on us !” exclaimed the lapwings, “and blind the eyes of the cruel men who are killing us !”

But the crown of the lapwings was so brilliant that it resembled the sun's rays, and even in the darkness it shone like the stars. There was no rest or escape for these unfortunate birds. The dark night, even, was as fatal to them as the day. The huntsmen pursued them with so much vigor that only ten remained alive.

“What shall we do ?” asked the King

of the Lapwings, who had not yet been destroyed. "Let us go and implore the great King to relieve us of these golden crowns that are the cause of all our misfortunes."

Immediately the lapwings started on their journey in search of the great King. Some of them stopped by the way, so that only a few reached the King's throne, where they were welcomed, the powerful ruler talking to them kindly as he would have talked to faithful friends.

"Lapwings with the golden diadems! My dear companions, what can I do to please you this day?"

"Great Prince!" they replied, "you can give us our lives by removing these unfortunate gifts that adorn our heads—by taking away these golden crowns that have been the cause of all our misfortunes."

"I will grant your desire," said the great

King; "but in remembrance of your kindness to me you shall hereafter wear a diadem of feathers; but bear in mind that happiness is not in the gift of the great or the rich, but that it only belongs to those who earn it."

Thereafter the lapwings were no longer pursued by man, and they were happier with their modest tuft of feathers than they had been with their golden diadem.

VI

THE ROOSTER, THE CAT, AND THE REAP-HOOK

The Story of the Rooster

Once on a time there were three brothers, who were orphans. The oldest was called Jack, the second was called John, and the youngest was known as Jack-John. Their father was a poor laborer, who was compelled to get up in the morning when the roosters crew for daylight, and he worked all day, and until very late in the night. He found it a hard matter to earn his daily bread, and it was only with a great deal of toil and trouble that he could provide for his little children. When the mother was alive they could

manage to make both ends meet, but after she died it seemed that everything was changed. The ground was less fertile, and the rains were less frequent, and the crops were smaller than they had been. In short, matters were in such a condition that the family had fallen into the most abject want; and to add to all this, during a very cold winter, their father died, leaving them alone. As may be supposed, the children cried and mourned a long time, but, at last, as is natural with children, they ceased to grieve. After a while, when all had ceased to mourn, the oldest said:

“The land has been a curse to us. Let us divide the inheritance of our father and go abroad. Perhaps we can make our fortunes elsewhere.”

“What inheritance do you speak of? What riches have we?” inquired Jack-John.

“I know not, my dear brother,” said the eldest. “Let us make an inventory and then we will see.”

The inventory was made without any trouble, and, after paying a few just debts there was nothing left but a cat, a rooster, and a reap-hook. The brothers thereupon, in order to be perfectly fair, had to draw lots. The short straw gave the rooster to Jack, the cat to John, and the reap-hook to Jack-John.

Then the three brothers embraced each other affectionately, and promised to meet at the old homestead as soon as they had made their fortune; and each took a different road.

After travelling a long time in the plains and on the mountains, always keeping ahead, Jack, the eldest, reached a great kingdom belonging to Prince Calamor. Jack's journey had been a long one,

and the sun was disappearing little by little, and the night coming on rapidly.

"Ah, how tired I am!" exclaimed Jack. "If I could only find a tavern where I could rest!"

He had hardly ceased to speak when, at a turn in the road he saw a beautiful castle, built on a rock, like an eagle's nest, and flanked on both sides by twelve towers.

"This is the very thing," said the tired traveller, and he announced his arrival by lifting the heavy knocker of a brass door.

"What do you want?" said a voice from the inside.

"I want a lodging-place," said Jack, "for myself and my little companion."

"The master of this house," said the porter, opening the door, "never refuses hospitality to those who demand shelter. Come in, and make yourself at home."

When Jack had entered, the friendly porter inquired :

“My friend, have you dined this afternoon?”

“My faith, no!” exclaimed Jack. “My wallet is empty, and it has been empty since morning.”

“Come to the table, then,” exclaimed the porter, pushing Jack along the wide hall-way. “Eat and drink and spare nothing, for you are the guest of his most powerful majesty King Calamor.”

Jack did not wait for a second invitation. He hurried to the dining-room and ate his fill, and his rooster—the rooster with the golden feathers—ate heartily of the crumbs that fell from the table. As it was already late, the porter made haste to prepare a bed for the wayfarer, and Jack soon fell asleep, with the rooster perched on the headboard of his bed.

It so happened that in that country those who served King Calamor had to go and search for Day every morning. They not only had to search for Day, but they had to hunt for the place where it could be found. Jack slept but lightly, and he heard the conversation of the servants, who were in the same room.

"Get up!" said one; "it is time for us to be going. We must be hunting for Day."

"Wait a little," said the other, "I am very sleepy."

"No, no," said the first, "we must make haste, or some one who rises earlier might seize the Sun and carry it away, and then the King, our master, would be very angry."

"Is the wagon ready?" asked another.

"Yes, and the axles are all well greased. It is early, and the wagon will not break,

as it did last week, and we will be able to go much faster."

All this time Jack was thinking to himself in this wise: "Truly this is a queer country that the King's people have to go off to hunt Day." The servants were up and ready to go, when Jack cried out:

"Friends, get back to bed, and I will take charge of your work. I will fetch the Day."

"What! you!" said a servant. "Only one man! And do you pretend that you can do what ten horses can hardly accomplish? You are making game of us."

"I make game of no one. You will soon see that I mean what I say," said Jack.

"That seems very queer," said the head-servant.

"Fear not," said Jack, "I will help you through this by the assistance of my little

companion—my rooster with the golden feathers.”

“But, see here!” exclaimed the head-servant, with an air of sternness, “if you do not bring Day at the appointed hour, the King will be without mercy, and you will be hanged.”

“Nay, let me do as I wish,” said Jack, sleepily; “go to bed quietly.”

With this assurance the servants and the carters did not need to be coaxed. They returned to their beds and slept heavily. Shortly after, the rooster with the golden feathers crew.

“What is that?” exclaimed the sleepers arising from their couches in surprise.

“It is very simple,” said one. “Our friend yonder is about to start on his journey in search of Day.”

“That is very strange!” exclaimed the others as they fell back in their beds.

An hour afterward the rooster crew again. "*Lock-the-Dairy-door! Lock-the-Dairy-door!*"

The noise awoke them all.

"What is that?" exclaimed the servants.

"It is nothing," said Jack. "My little companion is merely telling me that he has returned from his journey in search of the Day. Get up and see."

The servants at once arose, and, to the astonishment of them all, they saw the Sun appearing over the mountain-tops more brilliant than ever. Seeing this there was at once a contention among the servants as to which should be the first to carry the strange news to King Calamor.

"Master! master!" cried one, more nimble than the rest, "if you only knew!"

"What has happened?" exclaimed the King; "speak quickly!"

“The horses are——”

“Broken down like the others,” the King interrupted. “Well, it can’t be helped.”

“No, no, your Majesty ; the horses are still in their stalls, and the wagons have not been out of the stables. But, get up and look ! Get up and admire the Day.”

“Ah, you rascals ! Do you make game of me ? Did Day come by itself to-day ?”

“Yesterday, your Majesty,” said the servant, “a stranger came and asked for lodging for himself and a queer creature with golden feathers. It carries a bunch of feathers in its tail and a tuft of feathers on its head.”

“Ah, well, what did he do ?” said King Calamor.

“What has he done ? What has he done ?”

“Yes,” said the King, answer me.

“Well, then,” said the servant, “this insignificant creature, that seems as if it could be crushed by a blow of the hand, is stronger than all your horses put together. Without wagons or assistance of any kind it started out, about two hours ago, and has already returned, bringing the Sun.”

“I cannot believe such a miracle!” exclaimed the King.

“Nevertheless it is the truth,” said the servant. “What fatigue and trouble this creature would save us!”

“Yes,” said the King, “how many horses and wagons would I not save! But what you say does not seem credible.”

“Nothing can be truer,” insisted the servant, “and you can easily satisfy yourself.”

“How can that be?” inquired the King.

“Well,” said the servant, “tell the

stranger and his companion to remain in the castle, and by watching with us to-night you can be convinced."

"Tell him to stay," said the King. "I am anxious to witness this queer phenomenon."

These directions were followed, and to the King who was waiting, the day seemed long indeed. Never had he been so impatient. When night came he went to bed in the granary with the servants.

"Do not be uneasy," said Jack; "I shall take charge of these matters again to-morrow," and everybody went to sleep with the exception of the King, who could not close his eyes, he was so impatient.

At three o'clock in the morning the rooster crew, "*Lock-the-Dairy-door!*"

"Who is that?" exclaimed the King.
"Who talks in that language?"

"It is my little companion, the rooster,"

said Jack. "He is preparing to go into the country in search of Day."

The King lay quiet. At four o'clock he heard again the sonorous voice of the strange creature with the golden feathers.

"Hey, my friend!" the King cried, "what is that?"

"It is the rooster who has returned," said Jack. "His expedition has been a prosperous one, as you can see. He has brought Day with him, and already the light of it is shining on the mountain-tops and filling the valleys. Rise, your Majesty, and see for yourself."

At these words the King arose and ran to the window. The stranger had spoken the truth. Day—clear, joyous, and resplendent—shone over the land. Bewildered and confused, the King could hardly recover from his astonishment. What would he not give to possess such an

enchanted rooster ! And if he possessed him, how jealous and envious of his good fortune the neighboring kings would be ! Without loss of time the King said to Jack :

“My friend, your companion pleases me much, and he can be of great service to me. Will you sell him ?”

“Sell him !” exclaimed Jack. “By no means ! I would not sell him for gold and silver.”

“Let us see,” said the King, “for a hundred crown pieces ?”

“No,” said Jack, sturdily, “not for a thousand.”

“By my kingdom !” said the ruler, “you are hard to please. What price have you set on him ?”

“In exchange for my companion,” said Jack, “I want you to give me your most beautiful daughter for a wife.”

"What!" cried the King, "for no less?"

"For no less," said Jack.

"So be it," said the King. "I give you my youngest daughter, and a hundred thousand gold crown pieces for her dowry."

In a transport of joy Jack threw himself on the King's neck, and the marriage was celebrated at once, in the midst of pomp becoming so great a princess.

From that time the good King Calamor had no occasion to send his servants and his horses for the Day.

The Story of the Cat

We have seen how Jack made his fortune. Now let us see what became of his brother John, the possessor of the cat. We shall soon know whether he wan-

dered over the earth in misery and misfortune.

Satisfied with the lot that had befallen him, the poor fellow went on his way singing and whistling, feeling no uneasiness as to his destination. He paused only to drink the sparkling waters, or to eat the luscious fruit that had been ripened by the golden sun. He travelled thus for many miles, until one day he found himself in the country where the birds speak the language of men—the country of the Murzipouloums, where the flowers sing songs to themselves, and the cattle fly in the air. He was astonished by these things, but presently he came to a village where a new and a more astonishing spectacle presented itself to his sight. More than a hundred people were abroad in the streets, armed with sticks, chasing rats and mice that seemed to laugh at them. At

the sight of this new and peculiar war, John could not keep his countenance. He laughed aloud. At this unseemly display of jollity the people on all sides cried out:

“What in the world are you laughing at?” Some were furious and some were curious.

“I laugh, my poor friends,” said John, “because you give yourselves so much trouble for so small a thing.”

“So small a thing!” they cried—“a small thing! One can tell you are a stranger here, otherwise you would know that the rats and the mice are our most terrible enemies. It would be an easier matter for us to contend with ten thousand men.”

“Now, is this true?” exclaimed John. “Well, here is my little companion who will aid you greatly. In one hour’s time

he will do more of this kind of work than all the rest of you could do in a year."

The people gathered around, admiring the little creature with gray eyes. It seemed to be very mild.

"Young man," cried they, "do you wish to have a laugh at our expense?"

"You can see for yourselves," said John, and with that he turned the cat loose among the rats and mice. You may be sure the cat was very happy. A leap here, a bound there, a jump yonder—to the right and to the left, before and behind—and the rats and the mice were destroyed by hundreds and by thousands. The people marvelled greatly, the more so since the cat had accomplished in a very short time a work that would have required the aid of an army of rat-killers.

While this work was going on, the Prince of the country happened to be pass-

ing by. He saw the work the cat had accomplished, and cried out :

“Hey, my friends ! Where did you find such a creature as that ? Where did you discover such a warrior ?”

Thereupon John advanced politely, and said to the Prince :

“The creature which you see so cleverly amusing itself with the mice is called a cat. It is my faithful friend, and since it came into my possession I have never permitted it to leave me.”

“My young friend,” said the Prince, “you have there a fine fortune. My castle is infested with rats and mice ; sell me your companion, and you shall be well paid.”

“Be separated from my best friend !” exclaimed John. “Never, never will I do that.”

“Let us see,” said the Prince ; “will

you not sell me your companion for a hundred crown pieces?"

"No," cried John; "I would die of grief."

"I will give you a thousand then," said the Prince.

"Never," said John, stoutly.

"My friend," exclaimed the Prince, "be reasonable. I must have your cat. Name the price."

John scratched his head thoughtfully, and replied :

"Well, give me a meadow and a mill, a vineyard and a thousand crown-pieces, and a carriage to ride in."

"They shall be yours," said the Prince.

"Then," said John, "my beautiful cat is yours."

The Story of the Reap-hook

We have thus far followed the history of Jack, with his rooster, and John, with his cat. What became of Jack-John, the younger brother, with his reap-hook ?

Journeying over hills and across valleys, with his reap-hook hung over his shoulder, stopping only to eat and to drink, the younger brother, at the end of thirty days and thirty nights, arrived in the great empire of Malissours. It was in the month of July, and the fields were yellow with the golden grain, which waved lightly in the wind. For the first time since he left home, Jack-John felt tired ; his limbs refused to carry him farther. How happy he would be, he thought, if he could only reach the village near by, where there was an orange-grove. But his efforts were

useless, and the young fellow lay down in the shadow of a big oak, and was soon fast asleep.

How long he remained there he did not know ; but when Jack-John awoke, it was morning, and he was surrounded by a crowd of people who eyed him curiously without daring to approach.

“ Hey, friends ! ” he cried, “ I am ravenously hungry. Have you nothing to offer me ? ”

“ Yes, yes, ” was the reply on all sides, “ but on one condition. ”

“ And what is that ? ” asked Jack-John.

“ You must tell us what the half-moon in a handle, which you have sleeping beside you, is for. ”

“ The half-moon that sleeps ? ” exclaimed Jack-John in surprise. “ What do you mean ? ”

“ Your companion that sleeps beside

you on the green moss," said the people.

"You make me laugh," said Jack-John. "It is not my companion—it is not an animal. It is simply a reap-hook."

"A reap-hook," exclaimed the people. "What a strange name! Never before have we seen such a thing."

Jack-John was astonished, but in a moment he thought that the time had arrived for him to make his fortune ; so he said :

"I see that your grain is ripe. It is time to harvest it. How do you cut it ?"

"Like everybody else," said they, "we gnaw it with the teeth."

"That must be tedious," said Jack-John.

"Oh, there are hundreds of us to do the work," said the people.

"And how long does it take you to complete the task ?" asked Jack-John.

"Two or three months only," the people replied.

"Ah, well!" said Jack-John, "what it takes all of you three months to accomplish my good reap-hook will do in one hour's time. A thousand of you working together could not make as much headway. Under its magic touch the grain falls and you have only to bind it."

"What!" they exclaimed, "that little instrument does all the work?"

"Yes, indeed," said Jack-John, "and if you desire it, I will prove it to you instantly."

Thereupon Jack-John made his way to the fields of ripe golden grain, and in a few minutes had cut quantities of it. The spectators were full of admiration. Never had they seen anything so extraordinary; and to these people it was indeed a most marvellous thing for them to see accom-

plished in a minute the work that would require the efforts of a hundred men from sunrise to sunset. On all sides there were shouts of joy and enthusiasm.

"Oh, the beautiful machine you have there!" the people cried—"the fairy that runs and cuts the grain. What a treasure to him who possesses it!"

"I see that my beautiful reap-hook pleases you," said Jack-John. "How much are you willing to pay for it?"

"All the gold in the world would not be sufficient to pay you," said the spokesman of the people. "Name your price."

"I want each one of you to give me as many gold-pieces as my reap-hook has cut stalks of wheat."

"Your demand is modest," they answered, "and to-day each one of us will bring the required sum."

After this Jack-John was lifted on the

shoulders of the multitude and carried to the neighboring village, where he was treated with great honor, and for a little more he could have become king. Soon, on all sides, the people brought sacks of gold, and such was its weight that ten mules were required to carry it. Jack-John, however, did not stay very long in this empire. He rightly thought that no country is so beautiful as one's birthplace, and, at the end of a few weeks, he arrived at his native village, where he found his two brothers, who had been as successful.

“Our good fortune,” exclaimed the eldest, “has made us rich, and now it ought to make us happy.”

VII

THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND

A RICH lord, who was at the same time the best of men, wishing to contribute to the happiness of one of his slaves, set him free. He equipped a vessel with a white prow and a golden stern, and said to his old servant :

“Go out into the world, navigate the seas, and choose a country that will please you, and always remember to do what good you can on the way, and remember also to avoid evil.”

The grateful slave set sail, but he had journeyed only a few hours when a terrible tempest arose, and it was so violent as to throw him on an island that seemed to

be deserted. The unfortunate man had lost his vessel and all his merchandise, and he was the victim of despair. When he landed on the island, the sole survivor of his expedition, he gave himself up to grief, and went forward friendless, alone, and in the direst poverty, not knowing where to direct his steps. But he was soon to be made supremely happy, for he discovered a path that was scarcely perceptible. He followed it with eagerness, and soon arrived at the top of a high mountain, from which he could see a great city.

He made haste to go in that direction, but what was his astonishment when, on approaching the city, he found himself surrounded by a great concourse of people, crying out in transports of joy. The drums beat loudly and the trumpets sounded, and on all sides the heralds exclaimed :

“Men ! here is your monarch !”

At last the slave and his cavalcade arrived in the city, and with great pomp he was installed in a marvellous palace, where the kings of the country had lived. The fortunate slave was taken in charge by the servants of the palace, and robed in fine purple garments, and his head was crowned with a diadem. Then the principal lords of the realm, in the name of the people, swore allegiance to him and the obedience and fidelity due unto sovereigns. The happy monarch for a long time believed that he was dreaming. His good fortune seemed to him to be a whim—the result of circumstance.

However, after a long time he realized the full measure of his responsibility, and thought to himself—“What does all this signify ? What does Providence wish me to do ? This worried him night and day,

and finally he sent for the wisest lord in his kingdom.

“Vizier,” he asked, “who made me your King? Why do the people obey me? And what is to become of me?”

“You must know, great King,” responded the minister, “that the genii who inhabit this island have asked the good Lord to send them each year a child of Adam to reign over them. These vows the great Being has deigned to answer, and every year, on the same day, a man lands on our coast. At such time the people are filled with transports of joy; they meet him with loud acclaim, as they met you, and crown him King; but the extent of his reign can only be for one year. When the twelve months are out, the King, who has been so powerful is stripped of his honors, clothed in coarse garments, and his soldiers, unmercifully

pursuing a custom, seize and convey him on board a black ship, which carries him away to a deserted island, which has been rendered sterile by the winds and waves. He that was only a few days before a rich and powerful monarch, now finds himself without subjects, friends, or consolers. Thereafter he lives a sorrowful life, and the people who have obeyed his will forget even his name."

"Were my predecessors," said the King to his minister, "advised of the fate that awaited them?"

"None of them were ignorant of it," the minister replied; "but they lacked the courage and the thoughtfulness to contemplate such a future. They were dazzled by the pomp and grandeur of their position; and, in their eagerness for passing pleasures they refused to contemplate the sad end that awaited them. The year of

their prosperity and power passed away almost before they knew it, and when the fatal day came they had done nothing to render their inevitable fate less insupportable."

At these words from his minister the King was filled with fear. He thought with terror of the precious time that had already passed, and with tears in his eyes he said :

"Wise friend ! you have announced to me the misfortunes that are in store for me ; who but you can tell me how to provide a remedy ?"

"Remember, your Majesty," said the minister, "that naked and in poverty you came upon this island, and naked and in poverty you must leave it. There is but one way for you to avoid the misfortunes that threaten you. You must send to the island to which you are to be exiled a

number of workmen and order them to construct vast storehouses and fill them with such provisions as seem to you necessary for sustaining life. You must prepare for the inevitable. Go quickly to work, for time presses. Time is approaching, time is passing away, and you must remember that you will only find at the place of exile the treasures you will be able to send there during the remaining few days of your reign."

The King thanked his minister, and resolved to follow the wise man's advice. Workmen of experience were despatched to the Island of Exile, and it was not long before a vast palace was built. The King conveyed an abundance of treasure there, and a thousand men were sent to render the island more inhabitable.

The day came when the King was to leave his throne ; but, far from regretting

it, he sighed for the hour when he would be able to take possession of his new estates. He was banished from the throne, divested of his royal robes, and sent on board a ship that conveyed him to the Island of Exile.

Having provided himself a place of refuge, he lived long and happily there.

VIII

BROTHER TIGER AND DADDY SHEEP

DURING the time when the animals could talk, Daddy Sheep was the terror of all the plains and the woods. When he walked abroad, with his sharp horns hanging on his head, the creatures that met him saluted him with the utmost politeness, and then ran away, glad to escape with their lives. In order for Daddy Sheep to have such a reputation as this, it would seem to be necessary that he had made a great many victims, devouring some with his teeth, and tearing others with his terrible horns; but in regard to these matters I am not able to testify. I am of the opinion, moreover, that old Mammy

Sheep, who knew him well, could not say any more. She and her friends, and, indeed, all the other animals, justified the proverb that is applied to those who are lazy and cowardly: "It is better to believe what you hear than to go and investigate the matter." As often happens, the repetition of a statement gives it currency, and all the creatures came to believe that Daddy Sheep was as terrible as rumor had described him to be.

One day, as Daddy Sheep was going out of the pasture, where he had been grazing on wild thyme, he came to a beautiful river and concluded to quench his thirst. He approached the water, and started to drink, but the terrible reflection he saw there—a frowning face surrounded by wrinkled horns frightened him to such a degree that he scampered home as fast as his legs could carry him.

One day a Tiger, who lived not far from this so-called king of the forest and plain, mustered up courage, and resolved to cultivate the good-will of his powerful neighbor by making him a visit. So he took with him his son, the young Tiger, who was already well grown. While yet at a distance the Tiger saw the powerful Sheep, and saluted him very humbly. Coming nearer, the Tiger, still humble and polite, inquired after the health of Daddy Sheep's family.

"I came, dear neighbor," said Brother Tiger, "to pay you a visit of respect. My good wife would have come also, but she is unavoidably detained at home expecting a visit from a friend, and she is compelled to postpone this pleasure to another day."

"Come in, neighbor—come in!" exclaimed Daddy Sheep. "To whom does this charming child belong?"

"It is my child," said Brother Tiger.

"Then you must accept my sincere congratulations," said Daddy Sheep.

"And your own son?" exclaimed Brother Tiger, with effusive politeness; "how is he?"

"He is very well, I thank you," said Daddy Sheep, "he is in the house."

While the two fathers were gravely discussing the affairs of the country, the young Tiger and the young Sheep went out into the garden to play. After a while, Brother Tiger became so uneasy that he could scarcely keep still.

"Excuse me a moment," he said to Daddy Sheep, "I will return directly."

"Certainly, certainly!" exclaimed Daddy Sheep. "Do not stand on ceremony here."

At once Brother Tiger went out and whispered to his son:

“Be careful, my child! You must be very polite with the little Sheep, and do not get angry, or he will eat you up.”

The Tiger went back to the house, and the two young friends returned to their play. Soon the young Tiger forgot the counsel of his father, and, during their frolic, he jumped on the little Sheep and tickled him. This made the little Sheep laugh and show his teeth.

“Why, what small teeth you have!” cried the little Tiger.

“They are all like that in my family,” said the little Sheep, “and those of my father are not any longer.”

This set the little Tiger to thinking, and as soon as the visit was ended he exclaimed, almost before Daddy Sheep’s door was shut :

“Pappy, pappy! did you see the little Sheep’s teeth? They are very short, and

he says that those of all his family are no longer than his."

"Hush!" exclaimed Brother Tiger. "Speak low, you little rascal, or Daddy Sheep will hear you and eat us both."

Brother Tiger, however, who had a mind of his own, thought that there might be something in what his son had said, and the idea gave him pleasure. Daddy Sheep was so fat, and his flesh must therefore be so delicate and tender. For a long time the suggestion of the little Tiger worried Brother Tiger, and he was absorbed in deep thought. Finally, one day, he mustered up all his courage, and declared that he would taste the flesh of Daddy Sheep.

But, he thought to himself, how could he see Daddy Sheep's teeth? At last the opportunity presented itself, for Daddy Sheep and his son paid Brother Tiger a

visit. Brother Tiger received Daddy Sheep with the greatest politeness, and saluted him. He invited Daddy Sheep into his house, and begged him to make himself at home. For the refreshment of his guests Brother Tiger set out wine. The little Sheep drank some and went out to play; but Daddy Sheep, who was very fond of his glass, remained inside.

"How do you like my wine, neighbor?" asked Brother Tiger.

"It is most excellent!" exclaimed Daddy Sheep, with enthusiasm.

"Then have another glass," said Brother Tiger.

"Very well," said Daddy Sheep; "I thank you and drink to your health." Then he laughed loudly and said: "The weather is warm, and it is not out of place to take a glass of wine to arouse one."

"That is true," said Brother Tiger, "my wine cleans the cobwebs from the throat and clarifies the brain."

They drank together many times, but, in spite of all, Brother Tiger was unable to see Daddy Sheep's teeth. He talked softly and modestly, and minced his words in a surprising way, as you have seen a young girl do. But Brother Tiger did not despair; he determined to accomplish his object, and so he again called attention to the wine.

"Wake up, Daddy Sheep!" he exclaimed; "I believe you are asleep. Arouse yourself and help me to finish this bottle."

"Thanks, thanks!" said Daddy Sheep, "but I am not thirsty."

"Tut, tut, neighbor," said Brother Tiger, "that is not the way to talk. Thirst is only for the gnomes and the sprites who

seek the dew. As for us, the kings of this country, we must drink to divert ourselves."

Feeling himself flattered and enjoying it, Daddy Sheep extended his glass. It was promptly filled and he emptied it. It was as promptly filled once more, and he emptied it again.

"Here's to your health," said Brother Tiger.

"And to yours, my dear host," said Daddy Sheep, and he again emptied his glass at one gulp.

The more Daddy Sheep drank the gayer he became, and the louder he talked. He lost his customary reserve, but he had not yet condescended to laugh. Brother Tiger, however, continued to press wine on his guest, and it finally came to pass that Daddy Sheep sat back in his chair, and laughed in the foolish way common to

those whose brains are befuddled by the fumes of liquor.

Brother Tiger saw the short teeth of his guest, and, without hesitating a moment, he leaped on Daddy Sheep and strangled him. Hearing the loud outcry made by his father, the little Sheep ran as quickly as he could to his mother.

"The wicked Tiger," he exclaimed, as he ran home, "has killed my father, and has no doubt devoured him!"

At these terrible words the Mother Sheep almost fainted with fright, and her grief was pitiful to behold. The little Sheep joined his mother in her wailings, and the mournful noise they made attracted the attention of the Queen of the Birds, who came out of the forest and perched herself on a tree near their house.

"What is the matter, good Sheep?" she

asked, "and what is the cause of your grief?"

"Alas, alas! Brother Tiger has devoured my poor husband!"

"Ah, the infamous villain!" exclaimed the Queen of the Birds.

"We will not dare to venture out any more," continued the Mother Sheep. "The vile assassin will hide around here and try to devour us also."

Touched by the tears of the Mother Sheep and her son, the Queen of the Birds tried to console them the best she could, and promised them that they should be revenged, and in a moment she had flown away to the neighboring forests. She gave utterance to her well-known cry—

"Pingle, pingle!
Dingle, dingle!"

and in a very short time her faithful subjects could be seen coming from all sides,

birds of high and low degree, of bright plumage and dull—the red-breast and the white-cap, the bald eagle and the green parrots. The Queen of the Birds uttered her musical call again—

“Pingle, pingle !
Dingle, dingle !”

And then all the smaller birds that had wandered off into the woods flew to her side, and begged to know what her wishes were. Their Queen then related to them the murder of Daddy Sheep by the hypocritical and cruel Brother Tiger. Her story was full of emotion and good feeling, and she concluded by saying :

“This assassin, my faithful friends, must die in his turn. Such a monster should not be permitted to live on earth.”

All the birds applauded with their wings at these words of the Queen, and they

could not help congratulating their sovereign.

"Go, my friends and subjects," said the Queen, "into the far countries, and say to the birds who have not heard my call, that I am about to give a grand ball, and that I will await them to-morrow. Meanwhile I will go myself and invite Brother Tiger, who cannot refuse to assist at the feast."

"But how will you kill this odious monster?" inquired the great eagle.

"Have confidence, my friend. Am I not the Queen? To-morrow you will be satisfied. While you wait, aid in preparing everything for the feast."

Singing, whistling, and screaming, all the birds began to work. The brambles were removed, the stones thrown away, and the grass alone, green and tender, was left in the space they had chosen for the ball. The next day the Queen of the

Birds was arrayed in the most beautiful dress imaginable. Escorted by her pages, she went to the house of Brother Tiger. Flattered by the visit of the Queen of the Birds, he vowed that he would go to the grand ball in the forest.

“I promise you a dance,” said the Queen, smiling.

“Beautiful Queen,” exclaimed Brother Tiger, “all the honor will be mine.”

He could not sleep that night—not that he suffered from remorse for his crime, but because he was carried away by the graciousness of the great Queen of the Birds. The next morning Brother Tiger brushed his clothes, curled his mustache, and went to the spot where the grand ball was to be given. As soon as it was seen that he was coming, the Queen of the Birds exclaimed :

“Take your places for a quadrille, and

let all dance with their heads under their wings. Music, play! trumpets, sound! and you, drums, beat! Whereupon, the orchestra began to play one of its most delightful airs for the dance:

“Tumpy, tumpy, tum-tum!

Tum-tum, tum-tum!

Tumpy, tumpy, tum-tum!

Tum-tum ti!”

Then the Queen of the Birds flew and met Brother Tiger, and made him welcome.

“My dear friend, you are late!” she exclaimed. “The festivities have already begun.”

“I trust your majesty will excuse me,” said Brother Tiger, “my clock stopped during the night.”

“That is nothing,” said the Queen; “come!”

Oh, what a delicious feast! what fine music! Brother Tiger was dazzled.

“My Queen !” he exclaimed, “I am glad you thought of me. A ball like this at your court is a rare occurrence.”

Long rows of birds stood facing each other, and birds of all degrees danced together.

After the quadrille the orchestra struck up a waltz, and the Queen courteously said to her guest :

“This time you shall be my partner !”

Filled with pride the Tiger took his place by the side of the beautiful Queen of the Birds. Then the birds, all with their heads under their wings began to dance. Brother Tiger wanted to join in the first steps of the dance, but all of a sudden the Queen of the Birds called out to him :

“Brother Tiger ! really you are not thinking ! The etiquette of my court is that the invited guest, in order to take

part in the dance, should appear without a head. Look around you. All here would think themselves guilty of the most unpardonable rudeness if they dared to raise their eyes in the presence of their sovereign. The simplest rules of politeness require that you should follow their example. Do as they are doing, if you desire to dance with the Queen of the Birds."

"Your Majesty," exclaimed Brother Tiger, blushing violently, "I had no intention of wounding you, and I humbly beg you to pardon my ignorance. I am merely a poor country person who is used to spending his days and nights in quiet places, and I am unused to the ways and customs of the court. Promise me another dance, I beg you, and I will return immediately."

"I never had any ill-will against you, Brother Tiger," said the Queen of the

Birds. "One cannot know everything. Go ! I await you !"

Brother Tiger rushed to his home, and in a very short time he arrived.

"Wife, wife !" he exclaimed, "get an axe. In order to have the honor of dancing with the great Queen of the Birds, one must appear before her without a head."

"My poor husband," said Mrs. Tiger, "I really believe you are losing your mind or that you are making fun of me."

"No, no !" said Brother Tiger, "it is the etiquette of the court. All the other guests were dancing without heads. Get the axe, wife ! The Queen awaits me."

Mrs. Tiger did not want to obey ; but when she saw that her angry husband was disposed to show his sharp claws, she took the sharp axe and cut off his head with one blow. It is needless to say that Brother Tiger expired instantly. The

good news was carried to the Queen of the Birds by two green paroquets, and when the announcement was made the birds took their heads from under their wings. All the other animals in the forest were invited to the feast, and Mother Sheep and her son were special guests. They were still in mourning, and therefore did not take part in the dance, but they received special attention and consideration on all sides, and the wonderful orchestra kept up its playing.

Now, big sheep and little children, let me whisper something in your ears: It is better not to open your mouths at all than to be too familiar with people you do not know well.

IX

“JUMP IN MY SACK!”

IN a barren and an unproductive country there lived, a long time ago, a father and his twelve children. A terrible famine came on the country, and the unfortunate father said to his sons:

“My children, I have nothing whatever to give you. Go out into the world, knock at each door, ask for work, and perhaps you will find the means of making your living.”

At these words the youngest of the twelve brothers, Abdallah, began to cry, and said:

“I am crippled, and it is difficult for me to walk. How can I gain my livelihood?”

“Dry your tears,” said the father; “your brothers will take you along with them. They have good hearts, and if fortune smiles on them you may be sure that you will not be forgotten.”

Early next morning the twelve brothers started out, after having faithfully promised their father that they would never be separated. But the deceitful brothers did not mean what they said. After several days of travel the eldest said to the others:

“Our little brother Abdallah is a continual burden. He delays our journey day by day, and if he continues to do so we will never get out of this miserable country. Let us forsake him on the way and perhaps some charitable person will find and take pity on him.”

This advice was followed by the brothers. The little cripple was deserted by the way-side, and the other brothers continued

on their way, begging from every one they met. In this way they went on until they came to a settlement of poor fishermen, where it was difficult to find a lodging-place. Fortunately for them the night was beautiful, the moon shone brilliantly in the sky, and a soft breeze tempered the heat that had filled the atmosphere during the day.

Overcome with fatigue the eleven brothers stretched themselves out at the foot of a tree, and they were soon sound asleep. After a while the dawn made its appearance, the brothers awoke, and the eldest said:

“For days and weeks we have been travelling without meeting with the good fortune we had hoped for. Let us leave this country for good and all. Only a strip of water lies between us and a land of plenty.”

The unfortunate brothers soon saw an empty sloop. They took possession of it, and at once began to drift out to sea. It was an unfortunate voyage. All the hopes of the brothers were deceptive. Their cruelty to their crippled brother Abdallah was to be severely punished. A frightful tempest arose, and the sea overwhelmed them; the sloop was wrecked and the cruel brothers found their graves in the cold and creeping waters.

Meanwhile what had become of Abdallah, the poor cripple whom the brothers had deserted? Overwhelmed with sorrow and fatigue, he had fallen asleep where he had been abandoned. Fortunately for him a good fairy, who had seen all, took pity on him, and while he lay asleep she cured his crippled leg; and then, disguising herself as a poor beggar, the fairy sat on a stone by the roadside. Abdallah soon

opened his eyes, his heart filled with sadness. He arose for the purpose of continuing his painful journey, but what was his astonishment to find that he could walk without any trouble whatever. He was no longer a cripple. He felt of himself, and ran and jumped to convince himself that he was not dreaming. He laughed and cried at the same time, and was filled with happiness and joy.

All of a sudden he saw an old woman by the roadside who looked at him smilingly.

"Do you know, madam," he cried, "if a great physician has passed this way?"

"And why, my friend?" inquired the old woman.

"It is because that, during my sleep, he has rendered me the greatest of services. He has cured my leg that was too short, and I want to thank him for his kindness."

"Well, well," said the old woman, "the physician is myself. I gathered a few herbs that I alone know, and it was easy to perform the miracle that makes you so happy."

Abdallah could not restrain his transports. He fell on the old woman's neck and embraced her, and then, to prove his gratitude, he asked her :

"My good woman, what can I do for you? I am young, but, as for you, age has already begun to bear heavily on you. Command, and I will obey you in all things."

But imagine Abdallah's surprise when, instead of the old woman, he saw before him the most charming young girl that it is possible to imagine. Her long blond hair floated on her shoulders, and her rich garments fell in gracious folds around her.

Overcome with admiration and respect

Abdallah fell on his knees in the dust ; but the good fairy said to him :

“ Arise ! I am happy to see that you are not ungrateful. Make two wishes, and they will be immediately granted, for I am the queen of the fairies.”

The young man reflected a moment and said :

“ I desire above all things a bag in which everything I want will be found in an instant.”

“ Your demand is certainly original,” said the fairy, smiling. “ What can you do with such a sack ? ”

“ A great many things,” exclaimed the young man, enthusiastically ; “ will you grant my request ? ”

“ So be it,” said the fairy ; “ and what is your second wish ? ”

“ A stick that will do my bidding.”

“ Very well, then,” and the fairy disap-

peared, leaving at Abdallah's feet a sack and a stick.

Overcome and delighted by his good fortune, the young man hastened to test the powers that had been conferred on him by these gifts. As he was feeling very hungry Abdallah said :

"Let a dozen roasted partridges get into my sack," and in an instant he found a dozen well-cooked partridges in his sack.

To eat without drinking was a very unusual thing in that country, so, presently, Abdallah cried out :

"A bottle of wine in my sack !"

Immediately his commands were obeyed. After his meal he felt as light as a bird, and he continued on his journey in good spirits, and the next day he reached the end of it. At the gate of the city he paused to rest and to gaze at the people

who were continually passing, when a beggar approached him and said :

“ Brother, we are poor ; let us unite our misfortunes and live together.”

“ How do you know that, my friend ? ” said Abdallah ; “ I do not solicit alms in order to stay here.”

“ Your ragged clothes and your bare feet, my brother, tell a very different tale.”

“ That is true,” thought the young man, and he immediately asked his sack to furnish him with two magnificent suits, such as were worn by the noblemen of that country. He gave one to the unfortunate beggar at his side and clad himself in the other, and the two went into the city resplendent with gold and precious stones, so that everyone thought that two rich and powerful noblemen had come into the city.

Soon the name of Abdallah was on everybody’s tongue, and the most brilliant

people of the city considered it an honor to call themselves his friends.

In that city Abdallah found an Evil Spirit, which presented itself to him one day and said :

"Magnanimous chief, the most respectful of your admirers is here before you."

"What do you desire?" inquired Abdallah.

"I want nothing," said the Evil Spirit, "but your reputation at the games is such that I desired to see you."

"You flatter me a great deal," said Abdallah; "but, really, I cannot play. The game is entirely unknown to me. However," he went on to say, "I desire to make one of your party in the hope that you will teach me something about the games."

The Evil Spirit and Abdallah made no delay in beginning the game, and the latter lost such large sums of money that the

Evil Spirit thought that the young man was ruined. Contented with himself and satisfied with the results of his journey, he was making ready to depart, when Abdallah saw the cloven foot that the Evil Spirit had not been able to disguise.

“Ah, ha!” exclaimed Abdallah to himself. “It is with the Evil One I have been playing. So much the better! I will show him that he made a mistake when he addressed himself to me.” Satisfied with his discovery, the fortunate possessor of the sack and the wonderful stick was content to wait until the next day.

Faithful to the engagement that had been made, the young man found himself on the morrow face to face with the Evil One. The game began, Abdallah lost many gold pieces, and still he continued to lose. This time the Evil Spirit won so rapidly and so continuously that he be-

lieved Abdallah was reduced to misery. Addressing himself to the young man, he exclaimed :

"Illustrious lord, the games of these last two days must have made a considerable hole in your fortunes. Through me, however, you can recover a good part of it ; but on one condition only."

"What condition is that?" inquired Abdallah.

"Let us understand each other. Let us become partners, and thus we can win all the money that the other players have."

But Abdallah would not permit the Evil Spirit to conclude his proposition.

"Satan !" cried he, "your elegant disguise has not prevented me from recognizing you, and your cloven foot has betrayed you. The gold you have taken from me is nothing to that which I still possess. Had you won all the money in the world,

I would not be less rich. However, the day has arrived when you must expiate all your vile crimes. The hour has struck !”

At these unexpected words the Evil One took on a sinister aspect, and with a frightful laugh he began to mock Abdallah. At this exhibition Abdallah exclaimed :

“Jump into my sack !” and the Old Boy danced into the bag. “Stick ! beat on him !” cried the young man, and the stick began to beat on him in fine style, so much so that the Evil One yelled :

“Stop, or I will be dead ! Let me out !”

“What a delightful misfortune this would be !” exclaimed Abdallah. “Are you not content with matters as they are ?”

There was great rejoicing among the people who were gathered there. At last,

after the stick had been beating the Evil One for two hours, Abdallah said :

"Enough ! that is sufficient for to-day."

"What !" said the Evil One, "is not that enough ? Is the trouble not yet finished ? Am I to have my bones broken another time ?"

"Another time and always," said Abdallah. "I want you to perish, so that you will not continue to cut up your capers."

There was some further parley between Abdallah and the Evil One, which resulted in returning many unfortunate young people to their homes—young people who had been lost through their passion for gaming. When these unfortunates were restored to their friends, Abdallah permitted the Evil One to leave his sack.

After a little, Abdallah, who was always trying to make people happy, had a great desire to return to his own home, so that

he could see whether his father was still unfortunate. On his way thither he met a big boy who was crying at the top of his voice and wringing his hands.

"Well, young man," said Abdallah, "is your profession that of making faces? If so, what do you ask for them by the dozen?"

"I am not in a laughing humor, my good sir," said the other.

"What are you doing, then?" exclaimed Abdallah.

"My father," said the boy, "has fallen from a horse and broken his arm. I ran to the village for a physician, but, knowing that we were poor no one of them would stir themselves in my father's behalf."

"Is that all?" said Abdallah; but the child continued to weep. "Calm yourself," said Abdallah, "your father shall not

lack for anything. Tell me the name of the first physician you went after."

"His name," said the boy, "is Abdel-Meddin."

"Observe well," said Abdallah. "Dr. Abdel-Meddin, jump into my sack!" and immediately a man appeared and fell into the wonderful sack. At the order of its master the stick began to beat him.

"Oh," said the boy, "what a beautiful sack you have! Will you give it to me?"

"I cannot," said Abdallah, "but take this purse of gold; it will do you more good."

All this time the doctor in the sack was yelling at the top of his voice, and writhing and moaning. Abdallah stopped the stick, and then said:

"Mr. Physician, take advantage of this opportunity to rub your bruised limbs, for

you shall not come out of here until you are mashed into a jelly.

"Mercy," cried the doctor, "what have I done to deserve so terrible a chastisement?"

"Do you dare to ask me?" cried Abdallah. "Do you not recognize this unfortunate child?"

"Have mercy! take pity on me!" cried the physician.

"You did not take pity on others," said Abdallah, "and I shall be inexorable toward you. Beat him, stick!"

The wicked physician howled with pain and fear, until finally Abdallah said:

"Stop, stick!"

"I implore your mercy," cried the physician.

"Will you give me your word to take care of this poor boy's father if I release you?"

"I will do whatever you say," said the unfortunate doctor! "He shall lack for nothing."

"Then come out of the sack," said Abdallah.

The doctor came out, and he was so badly bruised that he could scarcely stand on his feet, but Abdallah made him walk.

Returning to the village, the doctor was so attentive to the poor sick man that there could be no doubt of his recovery, and Abdallah went on his way, anxious to see his father.

After several days of travelling he came to a dense forest, through which he was compelled to pass. Looking closely, he saw a pathway, which was scarcely discernible, and it was bordered on each side by thorns and brambles. This path led to a castle belonging to a terrible and cruel giant. The sun had gone down and night

had set in, and Abdallah knocked at the door of the castle.

“Who are you?” said a voice.

“A poor traveller who begs for lodging.”

“I receive no one unless it is giants who desire to have a tilt with me. We feast at night, and in the morning I hang them to a tree in the forest.”

“Well,” said Abdallah, “I will have a tilt with you in the morning. Open the door and let me come in.”

“Poor fool,” said the giant, “will you dare to contend with me?”

“I will do my best,” said Abdallah. “Open the door, I beg you.”

“Go away,” said the giant, “I do not wish to crush you.”

“Oh, Mr. Giant! would you be afraid to-day, and have I the power to make you tremble?”

“Poor creature, your impudence shall

have its punishment. Come in ! but to-morrow you shall be hanged."

"While I am waiting to balance myself on a limb," said Abdallah, cheerfully, "have my supper prepared. My appetite is large."

The cruel giant smiled at Abdallah's pretensions, and as he was a charming man himself, he took occasion to divert Abdallah. The supper was fine, and the evening was very pleasant. The giant related his exploits. He had fought a lion, and he had vanquished a sea-serpent with seven heads which had attacked him. One day, when an army came to attack him, he had the soldiers hung to the trees that surrounded his castle.

"Great giant," said Abdallah, smiling, "you make me tremble. It would be easy for you to get satisfaction out of a poor unfortunate creature like me."

“Miserable creature!” said the giant, “I warned you before you came into my castle. But eat and drink—above all, drink, for to-morrow shall be your last day.”

“Let us drink, Mr. Giant! let us drink, since the night still belongs to me. Here’s to your health!”

Overcome with fatigue, Abdallah left the giant and went to sleep, for he stood greatly in need of rest, and in the morning he was still asleep when the giant came to awake him.

“Get up!” the giant exclaimed. “You have lived long enough. Let us cross swords and see who will be the victor.”

“It is useless,” said Abdallah; “the combat would be too unequal. Let me go, I pray you.”

“No,” said the giant, severely; “you must die. Come quickly, I am in a hurry.”

"Well, then," said Abdallah, "since you insist on it, we will fight, but I regret it, I assure you, for I really do not want to kill you."

"Enough!" exclaimed the giant; "your insolence will soon be punished."

At this the giant raised his great hand with the intention of crushing his opponent, when Abdallah suddenly cried out:

"Jump in my sack!"

The giant made a horrible grimace, and seemed to hesitate, but, at last, with a loud cry, he threw himself into the marvellous sack.

"Stick, do your duty!" exclaimed Abdallah, and the magic stick, in a livelier manner than ever began to whack the cruel giant with great energy.

"Do have mercy!" exclaimed the giant. "Take pity on me!" Abdallah had mercy and the stick stopped.

“What do you think of our contest?” asked Abdallah. “Have you a mind to renew it?”

“You are a terrible sorcerer,” said the giant, “and I have never seen one like you.”

“Then,” said Abdallah, “you are conquered.”

“Have it as you will,” said the giant. “What can I say to the contrary?”

“You are right,” said Abdallah. “Good-by, Mr. Giant. You should be more hospitable another time.”

The giant was anxious to accompany Abdallah, and he persisted in going with him until he had passed through the forest. Abdallah continued on his journey, and it was not long before he arrived at home, where he was gratified to embrace his old father.

“My dear father!” he exclaimed, “I am

very rich. I am powerful and I come to you."

"My dear child," said the old man, "you deceive yourself, or my eyes have become very weak ; for I only see a sack on your back and a stick in your hand."

"No, father," the son cried, "we are rich, very rich. Hereafter we shall enjoy everything in abundance, and since the famine still continues, our neighbors will enjoy our good fortune."

In a few words, Abdallah told his father how he had been abandoned by his brothers ; and he told the old man also of the wonderful virtues of his enchanted sack.

"Your kind-heartedness, my son," said the old man, "has had its reward, but let us not, in our prosperity, forget those who are sad and cry because they are hungry."

"Do not trouble yourself, my father. For such as these our table will always be

spread, and our doors will never be closed against them."

While the famine in that country lasted, Abdallah established a tavern, where everybody could get a meal without money and without price. The marvellous sack was always ready to carry out the will of its master, and it was always ready to furnish the most savory dishes and the most exquisite wines, and this went on as long as the famine lasted.

When the famine had subsided, Abdallah would not give any more, fearing that he would encourage the unworthy and thus render very indifferent service to the country.

Abdallah ought to have been happy, but he was not. He had such a good and tender heart that he easily forgot and forgave all the injury that had been done him, and he was sad because he did not

see around him all the wicked brothers who had forsaken him on the way.

He called their names daily and commanded them to jump in his sack. Each time, however, he found in his sack only a pile of bones. His brothers were surely dead, and when Abdallah came to understand this fact, he shed bitter tears.

In his turn, Abdallah's father died, and Abdallah himself grew very old. When he felt that his end was approaching he drew a sigh of relief, nevertheless he did not want to die without seeing the good fairy who had been his benefactor.

Feeling thus, Abdallah started on a journey, trembling with emotion, and it was not long before he reached the spot where he had met the gracious fairy. He seated himself on a stone and waited for the good fairy to appear; but she came

not. He continued to wait, and, after a time, Death came along the road.

"I am hunting for you," said the grim traveller.

"Not for me, surely," said Abdallah.

"Yes, for you," said the other.

"I am waiting here for a friend," said Abdallah.

"Do I seem to be an enemy?" asked Death.

"No, no," cried Abdallah, "you are welcome, but I want an opportunity to greet my benefactor. I cannot go with you."

But Death fixed his eyes on Abdallah, smiled a little, and said :

"Jump in my sack !"

X

A SEARCH FOR A FRIEND

A RICH merchant of Bagdad had a son that he loved most tenderly. The child had been reared with the utmost care, and no pains were spared to cultivate his mind as well as his affections. When the young man's education was almost completed his father determined that he should travel in foreign parts.

"My son," said the old man, "I have gray hairs and a white beard, and in my long career it has been given to me to know and appreciate the real value of men and things. You must learn, then, my son, that among the pressing necessities of life the greatest of all is a good friend.

Riches take wings—a touch of providence, a turn of the wheel of fortune, throws the richest into the depths of despair; but death alone, which carries all off, can take away a friend.

“A true friend is the only thing in this world that is always faithful. Find this rare pearl, my son, and you will have found the rarest of gems. I want you, then, my son, to travel over the world, travel alone gives the real experience. The more we see of men the better we know how to live among them. The world is a great and a beautiful book, that instructs those who know how to read it. It is a faithful mirror that reflects all the objects we ought to see.

“Go, my son,” said the merchant of Bagdad; “take this travelling-stick, and in your journeyings think, above all other things, of the necessity of securing a true

friend. In pursuing this object sacrifice everything else, even what is most rare and most precious."

The young man embraced his father and took his departure. He went to a foreign country and remained there some time, and then he returned to his own country. When he arrived, his father, astonished at his quick return, said :

"I did not expect you so soon."

"You told me to seek a friend," said the young man. "Well, I have returned with fifty who are all that you have described."

"My poor child!" responded the old merchant, "do not speak so flippantly of so sacred a name. A true friend is so rare that he cannot be found in droves, and those who pretend to be such are only so in name. They resemble a summer-cloud that melts beneath the first rays of the sun."

"Father!" exclaimed the young man,

“your attack is unjust, and those that I look upon as my friends—those whom I regard as my friends—would not see me suffering or in adversity unless their hearts went out to me.”

“I have lived seventy years,” responded the old man, “and I have been tried by good and bad fortune. I have known a great many men, and during these long years it has been well-nigh impossible for me to acquire a friend. How, at your age, and in such a short time, have you been able to find fifty friends? Learn from me, my son, to know human nature.”

The old merchant strangled a sheep, put the carcass in a sack, and stained his son's clothing with the blood of the animal. At night the young man was told what he must do, and he took the carcass of the sheep on his shoulder and went out of the city.

Soon he arrived at the house of his first friend, and knocked at the door, which was promptly opened to him. His friend asked him what he wanted.

"It is in the midst of misfortune that friendship is put to a trial," responded the young man. "I have often told you of an old feud that has existed between our family and that of a lord of the court. Not long ago we met in a secluded spot. Hatred placed arms in our hands, and he fell lifeless at my feet. For fear of being pursued by justice I seized his body ; it is in the sack you see on my shoulders. I beg you to hide it in your house until this affair has blown over."

"My house is so small," said the friend, with an air of sorrow and embarrassment, "that it can scarcely contain the living who dwell in it. How could I find room for the dead?"

The young man begged his friend to have pity on him, but without avail, and the ungrateful man shut the door in his face.

"You see, my son," said the old merchant, "these are the kind of friends on whom you were depending."

"To tell you the truth, father," said the young man, "I have always suspected that this particular friend was a hypocrite, but all are not so. Wait, and you shall see."

The younger man continued to knock at the doors of his friends. Fifty times he met with the same reception. No one wanted to do him the kindness to hide the body.

"My son," said the old merchant, "you must see at last how little you can depend on man. What has become of the friends whom you were praising to me a little while ago? In your supposed misfortune

each one has forsaken you. I will show you the difference between the one real friend that I have and the fifty false ones whom you have tested."

As they talked, the father and son reached the door of the house of the one whom the old merchant had represented as the model of perfect friendship. The merchant related to his friend the imaginary misfortunes that had befallen his son, and begged the friend to hide the compromising sack.

"Oh, happy day and blessed hour!" exclaimed the faithful friend. "My house is large, and herein you may hide whatever you choose."

"Think," said the young man, "of the great dangers to which you expose yourself! Who knows but you may be accused of the murder, or, at least, of favoring the assassin."

“Well,” said the other, smiling, “one must expose one’s self to many perils when one desires to save the son of a friend. Go to my summer residence, where you will be safe from the clutches of the law. I will come to you from time to time, and keep you company, and if ever misfortune happens to you it will likewise fall on me.”

At this the merchant of Bagdad opened his arms and pressed to his heart the devoted friend, thanking him for his generous offers, and relating to him the simple artifice by which he had taught his son how rare true friendship is in this world.

XI

A CHILD OF THE ROSES

ONCE upon a time there was a King who had three daughters as beautiful as the stars that shine in the skies, and as different in their beauty. One day the King was sitting on his gorgeous throne, and he called his children, and said :

“I love you all better than I do my life. Now tell me in turn the nature of the affection you feel for me. According to your answer I shall give each of you the husband that you deserve. The eldest approached, and said :

“I love you better than I do my golden hair and my blue eyes, and I would do anything in the world to be agreeable to you.”

“My beloved daughter,” exclaimed the Monarch, “the King of Syra shall become your husband.”

The second daughter spoke thus :

“I love you, my father, a thousand times better than a queen loves her crown, a thousand times better than a dove loves her young, and to please you I would voluntarily throw myself into a burning furnace.”

“Oh, my child ! let me embrace you ! The Prince Miraz, the handsomest of men, shall be your husband.”

The youngest daughter, the favorite of the fairies, the charming Mirza, exclaimed :

“I love you, my father, as we love the salt in the bread, as the fish loves water, and as the May rose loves the dews of the morning.”

At these words the King turned pale with anger, and exclaimed :

“Go away! Leave me! You are an ungrateful daughter who cares for no one. Is it thus that you show gratitude for the pains I have taken with you? The love you have for me goes no further than the salt in the bread. Go away!”

The King drove his daughter from the palace, and ordered one of the waiting-maids to follow her everywhere, and to return only to announce her death. The waiting-maid took with her her own daughter, Calamir, and the three women travelled at haphazard for three days and three nights. Finally they perceived an abandoned cabin, and the Princess cried out:

“Let us stop here!” whereupon the women took up their abode there.

One day Mirza was sitting by the roadside, her head in her hands, weeping sadly. She was thinking of the great palace

where she was born, and of her more fortunate sisters, who lacked for nothing, and who had bracelets of gold and diamonds. She thought also of her cruel father, whom she still loved with all her heart. Suddenly Mirza felt a hand on her shoulder, and began to tremble with fear. It was the Queen of the Fairies, who looked at her with a smile.

“My beautiful child, why lament?” said the Queen. “All things are possible to me. Make three wishes and you will be satisfied at once.”

Mirza, however, did not answer. She remained silent; she could only weep.

“Grief fills your heart,” said the Queen of the Fairies, “and you can only weep. You are thinking of your father, your sisters, and the palace where you were born. Calm yourself. Hereafter you will be as rich and as fortunate as they. Weeping

or smiling, walking or standing, no person in the wide world will be as fortunate as you."

At these words the young girl smiled, and beautiful roses fell from her lips. She took a few steps to embrace her benefactress, and a thousand precious stones fell under her feet. The tears that shone in her eyes, in falling, became pearls.

"Kind fairy," exclaimed Mirza, beholding these things, "what wishes could I have made that would have been comparable to these gifts you have heaped upon me? A thousand thanks!"

The young girl pressed the queen of the fairies to her heart, kissed her hands and her lips, and gave full play to her happiness. Some days afterward, the Princess Mirza said to her waiting-maid :

"Go into the neighboring city, inquire for the best architect to be found and tell

him to bring a hundred experienced workmen."

The maid went into the city, secured the architect, and when three days had passed the workmen arrived.

"Queen of women," said the architect, "what can I do to please you?"

"I want you to build me a marvellous palace of pure gold, with ten doors of diamonds and a thousand windows of crystal. Build me a palace supported by a hundred columns of rubies and emeralds. I want it to be so resplendent that the neighboring kings and princes will stand amazed when they behold it."

The builders went to work, and in the course of a year the masterpiece of architecture was completed. One day the sisters of the princess passed that way. They were going to see their parents, and a joyous escort accompanied them, play-

ing on a thousand instruments in order to make the journey pleasant.

"My gentle pages," exclaimed the eldest, perceiving the palace, "to whom does this magnificent building belong? Is it the home of the fairies?"

"Gracious queen," responded one of the pages, "no one knows."

"Go, then," said the princess, "and find out, and say that we desire to visit this wonderful palace."

When the messengers announced to Mirza the wishes of the princess, she exclaimed, rapturously :

"These are my sisters—the children of my mother—who come to visit me. Happy day! Pages, return and tell them that I await them."

But the pages did not move. Each one seemed to be petrified with surprise and admiration. While Mirza was speaking

the most beautiful and fragrant roses fell from her lips, and at her feet hundreds of precious stones, pearls, rubies, amethysts, and diamonds sparkled and glittered. Finally the messengers returned to the princesses, and when the latter found that this beautiful palace belonged to their younger sister, they could not refrain from shedding tears of joy. Immediately they made their way to the palace, and soon they had the pleasure of embracing the sister whom they had long given up for lost.

The two princesses stayed a long time at the grand palace, their eyes dazzled at everything they saw. They were much astonished at the magnificent gifts showered on them by their sister. They went away from the palace with regret, and they were very sorry they could not carry away with them, in addition to their gifts, pieces

of the precious stones with which the courtyard was paved.

The renown of Mirza soon spread throughout all the neighboring kingdoms, and everyone praised her beauty and marvelled at her riches. The prince of a strange country fell desperately in love with her, and he sent an ambassador to sue for her hand. Mirza consented, and promised to become the wife of the prince as soon as the orange-trees blossomed. The ambassador was delighted, and hastened to announce the joyous news to his master. Magnificent feasts were given at the court of the prince, and soon everything was ready for the wedding.

As soon as the orange-trees bloomed, Mirza started on her journey to the home of the prince, accompanied by the waiting-maid who had served her in her misfortune. On the way, the princess became very

hungry, and asked for something to eat. Instead of giving her sweet cakes and luscious fruits, the maid gave her bread that was so salty and so bitter the princess could scarcely swallow it. Soon she was seized with a devouring thirst.

“My good friend,” she exclaimed to her maid, “what have you for me to drink?”

“Nothing, my amiable mistress,” said the maid.

“What! not even a glass of water?” said the princess.

“No, your majesty.”

The princess withstood the thirst as long as she could, and finally said:

“I pray you, my good friend, go and find a stream, and bring me some water to quench my thirst—only a few drops.”

At this, the waiting-maid said:

“Alas! we are in a very strange country.

Here, water is the dearest of all beverages."

"Well," said the princess, "take a handful of diamonds and offer them to the charitable person who will take pity on me and give me some water."

The waiting-maid started out, but she did not go a hundred steps when she hid herself behind a bush. Very soon she returned with an air of distress, and with a sad voice she spoke thus :

"Powerful princess, in this country, water is so dear that you will have to pay for a single goblet-full with one of your eyes."

In her despair, the young princess pulled out an eye, and gave it to the waiting-maid.

"Go," said the princess, "run quick, or I die."

The cruel waiting-maid returned, bring-

ing a little water, but scarcely did it quench her thirst for an instant. Not long afterward the princess began lamenting again :

“ I am still thirsty,” said she, “ and I feel that I am perishing.”

“ Give me your remaining eye,” said the servant, “ and hereafter you shall be satisfied.”

The bewildered young princess consented to make the sacrifice. This time, she thought, she could drink to her heart's content. Night came and the sun sank behind the horizon, and the perfidious servant stripped her mistress of her fine clothes and gave them to her own daughter, Calamir. The poor blind girl was left by the roadside, and the waiting-maid and her daughter continued their journey toward the city where the prince resided.

When they arrived all the bells in the churches rang out their joyous chimes.

The people went out to meet her, and the prince tenderly embraced the one whom he thought was his betrothed. Never had such a scene been witnessed in that city. The wedding feast was brilliant and splendid. One thing, however, disturbed the prince. He had been told that a rose fell from the lips of the princess at each smile, and that under her feet diamonds sprung. He did not see any of these things. Puzzled at this, he inquired of his wife's mother :

“Madam, how is it that roses do not fall from the lips of your child, and that precious stones do not appear when she walks ?”

“My dear prince, my child is fatigued at the long journey she undertook to come to you. Have patience, and you will soon be satisfied.”

During all this time, the poor Mirza,

the real princess, wandered alone in the frightful desert in which she had been forsaken. She called for help, but no one came to her assistance. Her cries grew louder, and at last they attracted the attention of an old woman who was gathering herbs for the purpose of making medicine.

“What do you wish, my beautiful child?” inquired the old woman.

“Good mother, what are you doing here?” cried the princess.

“I am looking for herbs that are necessary to make my medicine.”

“You can do better than that,” said the princess. “Pick up the pearls that you find at my feet, and go into the city and sell them.”

The old woman obeyed, and returned with an apron full of gold, saying :

“My child, what shall I do with this fortune?”

“It is for you, my good woman, but on one condition.”

“What is that?”

The poor blind girl smiled, and from her lips fell a rose so beautiful and sweet that there had been none like it before. Mirza answered :

“Take this rose and go into the prince’s city, and call out, ‘Who will buy this flower? who will buy this rose?’”

“And in order to please you,” said the old woman, “how much must I sell it for?”

“You must give it,” said the princess, “for neither gold nor silver.”

“And for what shall I sell it?” said the old woman.

“You shall demand an eye for it,” said the princess.

The old woman followed the directions to the letter. When she arrived

in the city of the prince, she cried out :

“Who will buy this flower? Who will buy this rose?”

At these words, Mirza's deceitful servant ran to the window of the palace and asked :

“Tell me, good woman, for what will you sell such a beautiful rose?”

“I will sell it for an eye,” said the old woman.

“Heavens! what would you do with an eye?” said the maid-servant.

“That is my affair,” said the old woman.

“Well, then,” said the waiting-maid, “stay a moment; and she ran to her room; and as she had been careful enough to save the eyes of her mistress, she took one and gave it to the old woman.

“Take this, good woman,” she exclaimed.

"And here is your rose," said the old woman.

At night, when the prince returned to the palace, his mother-in-law said to him :

"See this beautiful rose. There is none like it in the flower-gardens. My daughter made it with a smile."

"It came in good time," said the young prince, "but I can scarcely believe it. A thousand times I have seen your daughter smile, and nothing has fallen from her lips."

All this time, the old woman, who had sold her rose for the eye, was on her way to the Princess Mirza. But as she went along, the eye fell from her hand and was lost. She hunted for it a long time, but meanwhile the eye, apparently directed by the good fairies, made its way to the blind girl, who put it in its place and immedi-

ately she saw clearly. The old woman returned disconsolate.

“Alas ! my beautiful child,” she exclaimed, weeping, “I sold your rose as you directed me, but, unfortunately, the eye I received as the price escaped from my hands and I could not find it, though I hunted for it far and wide.”

“Do not trouble yourself, my good woman,” and Mirza smiled, and another rose fell from her lips.

“Go,” said she again, “and sell this flower on the same conditions.”

The rose was carried to the castle as the other had been, and sold for the other eye.

The princess recovered her sight, and regained her beauty. Shortly afterward, the beautiful Mirza said to her companion :

“Go into the towns and villages, and inquire by which road the king of this country goes on his hunting excursions.”

This order having been obeyed, the young princess sent for a number of workmen and an architect. On her way in search of these, the old woman met a little gray man who had a hump on his back.

"Where are you going, Margaret?" cried the little hunchback.

"I am hunting for workmen and for an architect," she replied.

"I am your man," exclaimed the dwarf.

"Are you capable?" asked the old woman.

"Patience, Margaret! patience!" exclaimed the little gray man. "Of that you will have to judge later."

Mirza accepted the dwarf as her architect, but she could not help saying to him:

"Little gray man, where are your workmen? Do you think to build by yourself the palace I desire?"

Scarcely had she finished speaking, when, at the sound of a low whistle from the little gray man, there appeared on all sides hundreds and thousands of brownies, who were cutting all sorts of antics and capers. Some jumped, some ran, some walked on their hands, and some floated in the air as light as thistle-down. But each of them, when he passed before the little gray man, said :

“Your Majesty, what do you wish to-day of your faithful subjects?”

To these questions the little gray man replied :

“Make the most beautiful palace to be found in all the world.”

Mirza, the princess, was filled with astonishment. Never before had she seen so many brownies gathered together in one place, and she said to herself, “Surely these must be the children of the fairies ;”

and, full of happiness, she went here and there, speaking a kind word to all, and at every step she took hundreds of precious stones were scattered under her feet, and, at each smile a rose fell.

At last all the brownies were set to work under the direction of the little gray man. Some felled the great trees of the forest and trimmed them, some delved in the mines for marble and precious stones, and others forged the rare metals out of which the vast columns of the palace were to be made.

Rapidly the new palace was built, and when it was finished it shone in the land like a rare jewel in the bosom of a beautiful woman.

“Now, then,” said the little gray man to the beautiful Mirza, “are you satisfied with my work, and do you repent having chosen me for your architect?”

“Powerful and most generous King of

the Brownies," she said to the little gray man, "how can I be dissatisfied at the sight of this rare palace, which you have built for me?"

"This being so," said the little gray man, "what is to be my reward?"

At this the young girl smiled, and a beautiful rose dropped from her lips.

"This shall be your reward," said she, giving him the flower.

"Thanks! thanks!" exclaimed the little gray man, and he instantly disappeared. The brownies were paid in the same way, and the young girl soon found herself alone with the old woman.

One day passed, then two, then three, and still the prince did not come hunting. At this Mirza grew impatient, and she said to the old woman.

"Go to the top of the hill and see if the prince is not coming."

The old woman went to the top of the hill, and looked around on all sides, but there was nothing in sight. The roads on every side were dusty and deserted, and she returned to her mistress.

"What did you see?" inquired the princess.

"Nothing, your majesty, but the floating clouds and the beautiful flowers."

"Go, then, and look again," said Mirza.

The old woman looked again and then returned.

"What have you seen?" inquired the princess.

"The waters flowing, the grasses growing, and in the limbs of the trees I heard the breezes murmuring."

"Return and look again."

So the woman went, and when she had come back the princess said :

"What have you seen?"

“Away in the distance, on the dusty road, I saw horsemen coming.”

“It is the prince,” said Mirza ; and, sure enough, the prince, followed by his retainers, his huntsmen, and his dogs, soon made his appearance. Suddenly, the prince, seized with admiration, paused and looked around him. Here, where there had been only briars and brambles, there arose before his view the marvellous palace that had been erected by the little gray man.

“To whom does this dazzling palace belong ?” asked the prince, but no one could answer him. “Await me here,” said the prince to his followers, “I will go and inquire, but I will return immediately.”

He approached the door and knocked, but there was no response, and one would have supposed the palace was uninhabited. He knocked again, but everything was silent except the clamorous echoes which he

himself had aroused. Then the prince climbed up to the nearest window, opened the blinds, and found himself in a marvelous saloon which was uninhabited. He pursued his way through beautiful halls and apartments, until he came to a room more beautiful than the rest.

On a bed of gold, Mirza was reclining, and as he approached she arose and exclaimed :

“ Who has dared enter my palace ? ”

“ Powerful princess,” said the young man, “ I am your slave. Do with me as you will.”

“ Who are you ? ” she cried.

“ The king of all this country—the most unfortunate of men since I have seen you.”

At these words the young girl smiled, and from her lips fell a rose. She took a few steps forward, and precious stones covered the carpet where she walked.

“What do I see?” exclaimed the prince, filled with astonishment. “Are you not Mirza, my affianced?”

“Yes,” cried the happy girl, “I am Mirza, who loves you ; I am Mirza, whose hand you demanded in marriage through an ambassador.”

At the remembrance of her misfortunes tears shone in her eyes, and pearls fell therefrom.

The prince was overjoyed ; he had been deceived, but he was now happy. Mirza told him all, and he would have had the deceitful servants burned at the stake, but the princess interceded for them and they were banished from the country. The prince and Mirza lived long and happily together.

XII

THE KING OF THE LIONS

A DONKEY one day thought that the time had come for him to go and seek his fortune; so he broke his halter and ran away into the broad fields. The grass was high and rank, and there was no lack of thistles. Happy over his good fortune, Brother Donkey brayed so loud and so joyously that Mr. Lion, who happened to be passing that way, stopped to inquire what the matter could be.

At the sight of Brother Donkey, Mr. Lion was paralyzed with astonishment. Never, in all his wanderings, had he seen such a creature. Mr. Lion looked at

Brother Donkey from a distance. Then he approached a little nearer, and finally mustered up courage to say :

“Who are you, and what is your name?”

“My name is Brother Donkey,” replied the other, “and I am the ruler of all Donkeydom.”

“I do not know that country,” said Mr. Lion, “but I myself am a monarch, and the most of the other animals have chosen me for their king.”

“If that is the case,” said Brother Donkey, “we are brothers, and we will continue our travels together.”

“With the greatest pleasure,” responded Mr. Lion. “One can only gain by being in good company.”

So the two started on their journey together. As they went along, Mr. Lion thought he saw that Brother Donkey

was not as formidable as he had at first appeared. There was something in his gait, something in his appearance, that led to this suspicion, and when he saw a tiger, he seemed to be so frightened that the King of the Desert said :

“Come, my friend, and let us wrestle together for fun.”

“No, no, my comrade,” exclaimed Brother Donkey, “for I am so strong that in spite of myself I should be compelled to crush you with my feet.”

Mr. Lion, thinking this was true, made a profound bow to the King of Donkeydom, and the two continued on their journey together. It so happened that they had to cross a river. With one bound Mr. Lion reached the other side, but, on the contrary, Brother Donkey went down into the water and began to swim in a very awkward manner; so awkward, indeed,

that it seemed he was in danger of drowning.

"How is it," exclaimed Mr. Lion, in astonishment, "that you cannot swim?"

"What, I?" said Brother Donkey. "I split the water more rapidly than a boat, and the fishes themselves could not beat me in a race."

"If that is true," said Mr. Lion, "why does it take you so long to cross a stream?"

"Ah," exclaimed Brother Donkey, "it was because I had caught with my tail an eel so large and heavy that I was about to sink, and I was compelled to turn it loose in order to rejoin you."

Mr. Lion was satisfied with this answer, and the two friends resumed their journey. As they went along they soon came to a high stone wall. Mr. Lion leaped over it at a bound, but Brother Donkey was unable to get over so quickly. He raised

himself on his hindlegs, placed his forefeet on the wall, and hung suspended there. Mr. Lion, seeing this, cried out :

“What are you doing there?”

“Do you not see,” said Brother Donkey, “that I am weighing myself? I want to see if the part of my body in front is as heavy as the part that is behind.”

Brother Donkey, after great effort, at last succeeded in getting over the wall. Mr. Lion then said to his companion :

“Powerful King of Donkeydom, my esteemed friend! I believe that you are making sport of me. I believe that your strength, at its best, is no greater than that of a child.”

“Do you have such a thought as that?” said Brother Donkey, with a smile. “You make a serious mistake, great King of Beasts. Let us make a trial of strength right here. Let us see which of us is able

to destroy that great wall. The one that is victorious will be known as the king of the animals."

"This is a good idea," exclaimed Mr. Lion, heartily, "and I accept your conditions with pleasure."

Immediately Mr. Lion made an effort to show his power. He struck the wall with his paws, and then with his tail. He struck it on the right and on the left, but he only wounded himself. He did not succeed in making one stone fall. At the end of a quarter of an hour he gave up in despair.

"I cannot make an impression on this strong wall," said Mr. Lion. "Let us see if you will be more fortunate."

At once Brother Donkey began to bray and kick, and he used his heels with such effect that in a few minutes the wall was knocked down and destroyed.

“What do you think of this?” cried Brother Donkey. “Do you still think you are stronger than I am?”

“No,” said Mr. Lion, humbly. “Until to-day I had thought myself the king of animals, but I was mistaken, and the title belongs to you hereafter.”

“But even yet,” said Brother Donkey, “you do not know what I can do.”

“Then,” said Mr. Lion, “what can you do that is so extraordinary?”

“Well,” replied Brother Donkey, “I can eat thorns.”

“Thorns!” exclaimed Mr. Lion. “Do you really mean what you say?”

“Of course,” said Brother Donkey, “I am telling you the simple truth.”

“I would not dispute your word,” said Mr. Lion, “but I am really anxious to see you perform this wonderful feat.”

“Do you see the thistles growing over

there in that field?" inquired Brother Donkey.

"I do, indeed," said Mr. Lion.

"Well," said Brother Donkey, "I am going to eat them."

Then Brother Donkey, who had not eaten since morning, began to devour the thistles. Astonished at this, Mr. Lion said to Brother Donkey :

"I think you are the most extraordinary creature I ever saw, and I want you to be recognized as King of the Lions. Do you consent?"

"With pleasure," Brother Donkey replied.

The next day, or shortly thereafter, a convention of all the lions was held, and Brother Donkey was elected king without any opposition whatever. He reigned over them many years, and he was the better able to do this from the fact that he never

disputed with his subjects over their prey. Brother Donkey ate his thistles and the lions ate their fresh meat, and all was peace in that country.

XIII

THE VIZIER, THE MONKEY, THE LION, AND THE SERPENT

ONCE on a time a ruler who was the king of men, as well as the king of beasts, called his Vizier, Rustem, to whom he had confided the education of his only son, and said :

“Tell me, does my son follow your advice, and does he give promise of making a worthy successor of his father ?”

“Though he is still youthful, the young prince bids fair to become the king of men,” said Rustem ; “your son is already fitted to rule both man and beast.”

Never was a vizier so untruthful ; never had a tutor so corrupted a young prince.

He had implanted in his pupil's mind the vices which were his own. He had made him greedy, unjust, and impatient at the least contradiction. The Vizier had made the young prince believe that the people whom he was one day to govern were a lot of miserable cattle who were to be imposed on at the King's will.

It happened in those days that a merchant came to the King's palace, having for sale a collection of rich jewels. He had them of all kinds and all prices—diamonds, pearls, rubies, and emeralds—all heaped together in a beautiful casket of carved cedarwood. The Prince remained for hours admiring this marvellous collection of treasures.

“Ah,” he exclaimed, “how I wish I had money enough to buy all that I see !”

“Prince,” said the Vizier, “are you not

the master? Command, and these treasures are yours."

"Well, then," said the Prince, "so be it;" and with that his slaves took possession of the casket and drove the poor merchant away from the palace.

The merchant, however, was not willing to submit to such an injustice. He went about making his charges and his complaints in the public places, until at last the matter became a scandal that could not be overlooked. So the powerful young Prince had him whipped with such severity that he expired not far from the palace.

The news of this terrible crime came speedily to the ears of the King, who became enraged with his son and with the perfidious Rustem. He drove them both from the palace. The tutor was banished from the court, and the young Prince was

placed in a castle at some distance from his father's palace. Forgetting the irreparable injury he had caused, the Vizier one day went to see his former pupil. He fancied he would be received with open arms, as in the past; but what was his surprise to find himself loaded with reproaches. With a significant gesture the young Prince ordered his old tutor from his presence. The Vizier retired in confusion. It was night, and for a long time he wandered in the forest.

Vaguely walking about he fell in a pit that had been set as a trap for wild animals. What was his terror to find himself in the company of a Lion, a Monkey, and a Serpent, each of whom had fallen into the pit. When morning came the ex-vizier found himself in the midst of sad reflection. He was fearful that he would lose by hunger the life these beasts had

left him, when, all of a sudden, he saw a man peering over the edge of the pitfall. Then the Vizier set up a terrible cry, and the traveller, touched with pity, threw him a rope so that he could escape from his perilous position.

The Monkey, nimbler than the Vizier, seized the rope and ran up it, much to the surprise of the traveller, who had expected a different visitor.

“You will not be sorry for this,” said the Monkey, by way of apology. “I know how to be grateful for a service, and I know how to cherish a benefactor. To prove to you that I am in earnest, I will give you a piece of advice. Do not rescue the man whose voice you heard in the pitfall. He is a knave, and he will soon cause you to repent of your generosity. I live at the foot of the mountain yonder, where I hope to meet you some

day and be of service to you. Farewell ! ”

The traveller was not much impressed with the words of the Monkey, but he allowed the creature to go its way, and threw the rope again into the pitfall in the hope of rescuing his fellow-man, whose voice he had heard.

In a moment he felt a considerable weight on the rope, and he thought that he was now rescuing the man, but, to his utter surprise, a terrible Lion came climbing up. His mane was shaggy, his teeth were white and cruel, and his claws were long and crooked. It seemed to the traveller that he would be compelled to drop this terrible creature back into the pitfall, but the Lion's voice reassured him.

“ Do not be afraid,” said the Lion. “ You have won a protector whose services are not to be disdained. You have

given me my life to-day and perhaps I may be able to save yours. Your fellow-man, who is still in the pitfall, will never be able to be of such service to you."

The traveller thereupon redoubled his efforts and drew the lion to the top.

"Friend," said the Lion, "my den is in this forest, opposite the mountain. Come and see me, and you will always be welcome."

There still remained two prisoners to deliver, and the rope was thrown back in the pit. The Serpent wound himself around it, and was drawn up.

"Generous friend," cried the Serpent, "I want to give you a piece of advice, and as advice is considered to be cheap, I have no idea that you will follow it. Serpents are considered to be wise. I have left in the bottom of this pitfall the most

outrageous impostor the world has ever seen. Leave him to his fate if you do not wish to regret your kindness. You seem to be too kind, but on the faith of a serpent I will deliver you out of the first difficulty into which your good heart gets you. My house is all along the walls of the neighboring city."

But in spite of all this advice the traveller was too generous to permit his fellow-man to die in the pitfall, and for the fourth time he dropped the rope. The Vizier seized it and was saved. It is impossible to describe the joy of the Vizier at this turn of affairs. His expressions of gratitude were effusive. He embraced his deliverer and called him his saviour. He wanted to relate his history to the traveller, and, in doing so began to deceive his benefactor. He spoke only of the injustice of the King, and his discourse seemed

to be so full of truth that the traveller was grateful that it had fallen to his lot to rescue so admirable a person.

“I live in the adjoining village,” said the deposed Vizier, “and I offer you a home there. You shall be made welcome.”

The traveller thanked him heartily, but he had other ends in view. He was on his way to the Ganges to purchase merchandise, and he proceeded thither with that inward satisfaction that arises from the accomplishment of a good deed. On the shores of the Ganges, in India, the traveller entered into trade, and his fortunes prospered. He soon found himself possessed of a large sum of money, and he was filled with a desire to see his native country. He returned by the same road, and, after travelling for some time, he found himself once more in the forest where, on a former occasion, his rope had

been of such assistance to the unfortunates who had fallen into the pit.

He remembered with pleasure the eloquent words of the grateful Rustem, and he regretted that he could not see his old friend. As for the three animals—the Monkey, the Lion, and the Snake—their remarks had made but little impression on his mind; he was only grateful to them for not having devoured him.

While he was thinking of these things the rich traveller found himself surrounded with enemies even more ferocious than the animals he had rescued. He found himself in the midst of a band of thieves. The robbers seized the traveller, compelled him to dismount from his horse, took possession of his treasures, and were preparing to take his life, when the captain of the band remarked that it would be a useless murder. But the thieves bound the

traveller at the foot of a tree, and left him to die there of hunger.

The cries of the unfortunate traveller reached the ears of the big Monkey that had been rescued from the pitfall. His instinct recognized the voice of his deliverer, and he came to the rescue of the traveller. The Monkey seized the bonds in his strong teeth, and they soon fell apart, and it was not long before the traveller was free to go his way.

But the grateful Monkey took him to his home, where fresh fruits appeased his hunger, and cool and pure water quenched his thirst. To the Monkey the traveller related his sad adventure, and the recital touched the heart of the grateful animal.

The Monkey had lived in the forest so long that he was not only familiar with the habits of the robbers, but knew where their abode was. To that he made haste

to go. He found the robbers asleep, with many treasures by their side. He seized bags of gold and silver and precious stones, together with a supply of rich apparel, and carried them to his benefactor.

Having recovered his hard-earned fortune, the traveller thanked the Monkey, and continued on his journey. He was astonished that such a creature could be so grateful, and reproached himself for never having thought of the animal. He was walking along in the midst of these reflections when he heard a terrible roaring, and a ferocious-looking Lion appeared before him. The traveller was seized with terror. He was so frightened that he leaned against a tree to keep from falling to the ground. To his surprise, the King of the Forest spoke to him thus :

“Good-day, my friend, my deliverer ! It was you that saved my life. I want to

show you my gratitude. Come into my cavern and take a few moments' rest."

The conduct of the Monkey had somewhat reconciled the traveller to the animals. Whatever fear he might have had in the presence of the Lion, the traveller hoped that the King of Beasts would not be less generous than the Monkey.

"I am happy to tell you," said the Lion, after having heard about the Monkey, "that gratitude ought to be the first virtue of beasts, since it is not that of man." At the same time the Lion thought to himself—"How can I show my gratitude to my dear deliverer, and what can I do for him so as not to appear inferior to the Monkey?"

He was filled with these reflections when they arrived at the cavern. The traveller was well taken care of by the Lion. He dined most sumptuously, drank

of the best wines, and ate of the most delicious fruits. But while they were discussing the dessert, the same distressing thought came into the Lion's head—
“What can I do to retain my dignity and pay the sacred debt I owe my deliverer?”

But he could not think of anything suitable, and the traveller observed it. So he said :

“What is the matter, my friend? You seem disconsolate.”

“Nothing,” said the Lion. “But you must promise me that you will not leave this place until I return.”

“But why?” inquired the traveller.

“You will know later,” responded the lion.

“Very well,” said the traveller, “here I will remain.”

The Lion bounded away, and he was soon in the middle of the forest, looking

this way and that, to the right and to the left, in search of something marvellous to give to the traveller, when all of a sudden he saw the young Prince, the Vizier's pupil, who had been exiled, promenading in his castle grounds. On the Prince's head there was a turban, which was ornamented with a superb cluster of diamonds.

"That is the very thing," exclaimed the Lion, and with one bound he seized the Prince and strangled him. Thus was the jeweller avenged, and his diamonds were returned to him. The traveller, who had been robbed and beaten by order of the young Prince and his Vizier, was glad to get his jewels back, and he did not know how to be grateful enough to the Lion, of whom he had formerly been afraid.

The traveller then set out toward the city in hopes of finding his excellent friend

Rustem. He hoped, indeed, to spend some time with this philosopher, whom he had rescued, and who had offered to share his house with his benefactor. With a happy heart and a light step the traveller went on his way, and the next morning at the break of day he reached the city where the former Vizier had taken up his abode. In spite of the early hour the streets were crowded, and the squares were filled with people. On all sides the populace spoke to each other in subdued tones, as if some dreadful calamity were pending.

The curiosity of the traveller was excited, and he approached a group, and listened. Some one was relating that the young Prince, who had been exiled from the court, had been found bleeding and dead in the park of the castle. It was thought that the murder of the Prince was the work of some thief who desired to get

possession of the beautiful jewels that the young man wore.

Having his curiosity satisfied, the traveller made his way to the house of his friend, the philosopher Rustem, where he was received with open arms. According to the wishes of his friend, the traveller related all the particulars of his journey, which were even more wonderful than are related here. He told, in short, his whole history. He told Rustem of all his troubles—how he had been rescued by a Monkey, and how he was met by a terrible Lion, who was rejoiced to see him, and who had given a sumptuous feast in his honor ; and who, thinking this not enough, had presented him with a magnificent cluster of diamonds.

After relating this extraordinary adventure, the traveller made bold to exhibit to Rustem the beautiful diadem, who re-

garded it with a greedy and knowing look, and who made many exclamations of surprise and admiration. The worthy traveller did not foresee the troubles that this unfortunate diadem was to cause him. He did not know that it had been the cause of the death of the son of the King.

Meanwhile, Rustem was thinking to himself, "I recognize these diamonds. They belonged to my young master. What a reward must be in store for the one who will inform the monarch of the murderer of his child !"

Night came, and the traveller was fast asleep. The cluster of diamonds was lying on a table. The cowardly Vizier seized it and ran to the palace. The ingrate, cowardly as he was, would not hesitate to sacrifice his benefactor, provided he could recover his lost power.

“Here is the property of the son whom you have so rigorously punished. Do you recognize these diamonds? I have in my power the assassin who had possession of this diadem.”

The unfortunate King wept on seeing the familiar ornament which his favorite son had worn. He kissed it, and pressed it to his heart as if it had been his favorite child.

“Let the murderer be brought before me,” he exclaimed, “and he shall be thrown into the darkest dungeon.”

The unfortunate traveller, who was ignorant of the crime of which he was accused, was brought before the King with trouble and confusion imprinted on his features. He saw the perfidious Rustem in the crowd that surrounded him, and, remembering the wise counsels of the Monkey and the Serpent, suspected that

he had been made the victim of this treacherous person.

"I deserve," he said, sadly, "the cruel lot that is in store for me."

The King, mistaking the true meaning of these words, thought that the prisoner had been frightened into making a confession. He was thereupon condemned to be burned in the public square.

Fortunately, as this punishment was to be witnessed by the whole populace, it was postponed until after the funeral of the young Prince. The poor traveller was cast into the dungeon set apart for the condemned. It was dark and clammy, and on entering it he bade farewell to life and happiness.

A friend, however, was watching over the poor traveller. It was the Serpent he had delivered from the pitfall. Cautiously he crawled along the damp walls and

under the doors, and avoided the observation of the jailers. The traveller recognized him at once.

"Fear nothing," said the Serpent, "I come to deliver you."

"How can you do that, my friend?" asked the traveller.

"I have promised to redeem you from the results of your own generosity, and I am faithful to my promise. You refused to believe that man is the most ungrateful of the animals, and that he returns evil for good. You have forgotten the good advice given you by the Lion and the Monkey. However, let us forget that. I will be more cunning than the vile wretch who is seeking your ruin."

"What must be done?" the traveller asked.

"Take this herb. It alone has virtue to cure the poison with which I have inocu-

lated the King's favorite wife. The monarch has now become a victim of the keenest grief, and you alone can appease it. He will soon forget the crime of which you are accused. He who can make himself useful is always innocent. Advertise your talents; that is the way to success. Apply the herb I have given you, and you will perform miracles. Farewell! time presses. Here comes the King to visit you."

The traveller took the advice of the Serpent, and it soon became known at the court that he had an infallible remedy for all sorts of poisons, and he was taken from the dungeon and carried to the palace, and to the apartment of the Queen. This estimable lady was sick and pale, and it was apparent that she was dying little by little.

The first application of the herb revived the dying Queen, and when the remedy

was applied the second time the gracious lady found herself fully recovered.

“Your Majesty,” said the traveller, “the Queen will never feel again the cruel pains that she has suffered, and her life is hereafter safe; but I am on the eve of terminating mine—a fate that I have not deserved. You are too just to punish an innocent person, and I am not the murderer of your son. That monster, Rustem, had contaminated the Prince’s youth, and it was through his corrupt counsels that the young Prince was dragged into disgrace. You will know this villain better when I prove to you that he is the most ungrateful of human beings.”

Then the traveller related to the King the adventure in the pitfall and all that followed. Convinced that the traveller was telling the truth, the King ordered that the ingrate Rustem should suffer all

the tortures that had been reserved for the man who was a prisoner.

This perfidious creature, Rustem, was ignorant of all that had taken place at the palace, and was waiting with impatience for the success of his treasonable plots. He was aroused from his vain dreams of greatness, seized, and hurried off to his doom.

XIV

THE ENCHANTED PRINCESS

ONCE upon a time there lived in a far country a young Prince, who desired nothing better than to take to himself a wife, but none of the women who had been presented to him suited his fancy or touched his heart.

“How is it,” he cried, “that in all my father’s kingdom I am unable to find a wife that suits me?”

The poor young Prince became disconsolate. He shed burning tears, refused to eat or drink, and dwindled away in the sight of the sun. The King saw his son’s despair and took pity on him. So one day he called the young Prince to him and said:

"My son, here is a gold key. Go to the top of the highest tower of my castle, and there you will find a door. Open it and enter, and you will then see before you the most beautiful and the most virtuous women in the world. You can have your choice. I hope you will find among them the wife you desire."

Filled with joy, Prince Erian took the golden key, climbed the long stairs leading to the tower, and soon arrived at the door his father had described. But there was no lock in which he could place the key. He searched in vain. Disappointed, he returned to his father.

"I found the door," he said, "but the key was useless. There was no lock."

"All that is necessary," the King replied, "is to touch the door with your key, and immediately it will swing back on its ruby hinges, so that you may enter."

The Prince made haste to return to the castle tower, and he had no sooner touched the door with the key than it swung on its ruby hinges.

Never since the day when the sun first shone on this poor earth of ours, never since the golden stars sparkled in the firmament, has such a scene been presented to the human eye as that which Prince Erian saw before him. An immense hall, inlaid with thousands of glistening diamonds, sapphires as blue as the sky, and opals with their changing hues, lay spread out before the King's son, who stood dumb with astonishment and admiration. There were soft carpets everywhere, unmatched pictures, and bright-colored flowers. Silver perfuming-pans swinging from their golden chains, and filling the air with rich incense, burned incessantly in this enchanted place.

There were twelve windows in this wonderful hall, and in each window a young girl stood, a living picture in a frame. All were so beautiful and so graceful that the young Prince was dazed. Never in his wildest dreams had he caught a glimpse of fairies quite so beautiful, and even the water-nymphs that he had seen disporting themselves on the water's edge were not so charming.

Dazed and delighted as he was, there was, nevertheless, a mystery that puzzled the young Prince. In the first of the twelve windows stood a young girl whose head was covered with a gauze veil. She alone had not turned when the King's son entered. Prince Erian stepped to her side and removed the veil.

"Why do you look at me?" she asked, sadly.

"Because," he replied, you are the most

charming of all the marvellous beauties that surround you; because you are like the moon among the stars—like the rose among the flowers of a garden.”

“What do you desire of me?” the young girl asked.

“Something that makes me tremble to say it,” responded Prince Erian. “I want to make you my Queen, and live at your side.”

“Alas! to marry me you must rescue me. I am the prisoner of the most powerful magician of the earth. I am held captive by Magor, the King of the Sorcerers.”

“No matter!” cried the young Prince. “I shall rescue you. I shall die if I do not make you mine.”

“May you be victorious over my deadly enemy; but, unfortunate that I am!” sighed the beautiful prisoner, “I fear you

will share the sad fate of the many gallant young princes who have wished to deliver me from my bonds."

Quite happy, Prince Erian returned to his father.

"Well," said the King, "did you meet the lady of your dreams?"

"Yes, my father."

"Tell me : which did you choose?"

"The most beautiful of all," exclaimed the Prince ; " the fairest of the stars, the rose that perfumes the gardens."

"The stars are all brilliant," said the King, " and each flower sheds its perfume. Answer me, my son ; which is the lady of your choice ?"

" My father, it is the veiled lady."

" Unfortunate boy, you are lost ! " cried the monarch. " It is the Queen of Golconda, the prisoner of Magor, the King of the Magicians, that you have chosen. My

poor son! to make her your queen you must take her away from that terrible sorcerer."

"Well, my father," cried the enthusiastic young prince, "I will be her deliverer!"

"Alas, my son!" said the King, "I fear you will fail, and then you will be turned into a statue of stone."

"The risk is mine," cried Prince Erian. "I shall overcome him."

"Ah, my son! your defeat is certain. Remain with me."

"It is too late, my father, I cannot."

The princely lover lost no time in setting out to conquer Magor, the King of the Magicians, who held the beautiful Princess in enchantment.

Prince Erian had been travelling for several days, when he came to a gloomy forest. Unfortunately, in passing through

this dark forest, he lost his way, and in spite of all his efforts, he could not find it again. He wandered about in the woods for some time when, suddenly, and as if by magic, a stranger appeared before him.

“Good-day, friend!” exclaimed Prince Erian. “What are you doing, and what is your name?”

“My name is Long,” replied the other; “and I am looking for a master who needs my services.”

“The master is already found,” said the young Prince. “If you give your consent you shall serve me.”

“Agreed!” exclaimed Long. “From this day I am entirely subject to your orders.”

“For the present,” said Prince Erian. “I ask nothing of you except to help me find my way out of this terrible forest.”

“Is that all? Wait a moment.” With

this, Long stretched himself to such an amazing extent that his head was above the tallest trees of the forest.

"What are you doing?" asked the astonished Prince.

"I am trying to find our way out." In a little while Long made himself short again, no taller than an ordinary man.

"Well, have you found the road?" the Prince inquired anxiously.

"Surely," replied Long. "We must take the one to the right of you, and soon we shall be out of this jungle."

So the Prince and his companion took the road to the right and soon found themselves clear of the impenetrable forest. As they came to its borders they saw a stout man sitting at the foot of a tree. He was round as any barrel, and he sat breathing heavily and wiping his face with the back of his hand.

“Good-day, my slim friend,” said the Prince. “What are you doing here, and what is your name?”

“My father named me Large,” replied the stout man; “and I am resting in the shade here, waiting for some one who needs my services.”

“Your services? And what can you do, my man?” inquired the Prince.

Large made no reply. He simply caused his body to expand to such an extent that he filled the open field. Before Prince Erian and Long could recover from their astonishment, Large caused himself to subside, being careful however, not to collapse so suddenly as to create a great storm.

“Now, then,” said he, “can I be of service to any one?”

“I think you can,” the Prince answered; “and since you possess such an extraordi-

nary talent, I will take you as my servant. Come with me."

"Gladly!" exclaimed Large, and the Prince and his two servants continued on their way.

As the travellers drew near their journey's end, they saw a man leaning against an immense oak. He had a bandage over his eyes, and he stood motionless, appearing to be very much preoccupied.

"Take this unfortunate person into your service," Long suggested to the Prince. "Who knows but he may prove to be of great assistance to you later on?"

"My friend," said Prince Erian, addressing the stranger, "what is your name?"

"My father named me Keen Eyes," said the other.

"A pretty neat name for a blind man," remarked the Prince. "What can you do?"

"My trade is to see clearly," replied Keen Eyes. "My eyes are bandaged so that my sight may do no damage to the objects I fix my gaze on."

"Really!" exclaimed Prince Erian; "if your power is so great, give us an example of it."

"Look!" cried Keen Eyes. "Do you see that immense rock yonder?"

"Yes."

"Keep your eyes on it! In an instant it shall fly to pieces."

Keen Eyes removed his bandage, looked steadily upon the imposing mass of granite, and it seemed to melt before his eyes; it crumbled and fell to pieces.

"My friend," said the Prince, "you are an extraordinary man. If you will come with me, I will take you as my servant."

Keen Eyes gladly accepted the offer.

After travelling a little farther, Prince

Erian and his servants, Long, Large, and Keen Eyes, came upon a magnificent castle, the walls of which were armored with iron and brass. This castle belonged to the terrible Magor, the King of the Magicians, who held the Princess of Golconda in the spell of his enchantment.

“This is the end of our journey,” said Prince Erian.

He then explained to his servants the bold scheme he had in mind, and they made an effort to enter at once into the castle, but the door was made of brass and it was barred and locked.

“What shall we do?” said the young Prince.

“Wait!” answered Keen Eyes. He raised his bandage, gave the door one glance and it crumbled into pieces. Without further ceremony, the four travellers entered the castle.

It was a wonderful place, this home of the King of the Sorcerers. On every side statues of gold and silver were to be found, luminous flowers, and amidst all the beauty, charming birds that spoke the language of human beings.

In one room of the castle the travellers found a table already set and covered with the most palatable dishes and perfumed wines. The Prince and his companions were very hungry; so they sat themselves down to the feast spread before them, and ate a great deal and drank a great deal more. After this excellent meal, Prince Erian and his three servants went out to walk in the beautiful garden. They had scarcely gone ten paces when they met Magor and his charming captive. At sight of these unknown persons, the Sorcerer stood dumb with amazement. At last, full of rage, he cried out :

“Why did you come here, miserable creatures? Dare you even pretend to take from me the pearl of pearls, the beauty without rival that I have on my arm, my pretty prisoner, the Princess of Golconda?”

“Yes,” said the Prince; “and all your magic will serve to confound you, if you do not use your superhuman art.”

“So be it,” assented Magor. “I will not crush you like an earthworm. I will do better. I will give you the lady of your dreams, but upon one condition only.”

“Name it!” cried Prince Erian.

“It is this: that during three days in succession, and precisely at twelve o’clock, you must present the Princess of Golconda to me in the large hall of the Castle.”

“That is an easy thing to do,” said Prince Erian.

“You are mad!” cried Magor. “Re-

flect before you accept the challenge, for if you permit the Princess to escape all will be over with you. That moment you and your companions shall be changed into statues."

"No matter," said the Prince. "I accept."

"If, at the appointed hour," the King of the Sorcerers explained, "you present to me the Princess of Golconda, one of the iron rings that I wear around my waist will fall off, and if all three should break, one after the other, you will be victorious over me—over Magor, the King of the Magicians."

Then Prince Erian took the arm of the lady of his dreams, the beautiful Princess of Golconda, and conducted her to the hall that Magor had pointed out to him. After the three days of the trial, the charming Princess would be his own—

all his own. With what happiness, he thought, would he present her to his father! "Here," he would say, "is the wife I have chosen. Magor, the King of the Magicians, disputed my right to her, and him I have overthrown!"

But what precautions they were compelled to use! Prince Erian closed the door carefully and then ordered Long to stretch himself all around the hall. Large was told to expand himself so as to stop up the windows, and Keen Eyes was made to loosen the bandage around his eyes. When all these preparations had been made, there was only a small space left for the beautiful Princess and Prince Erian.

"Keen Eyes," said the young Prince, "we must be careful; we must not fall asleep; we must watch to-night."

"Yes, master," responded Keen Eyes, "we must drive away sleep."

Nevertheless, worn out as they were, they soon closed their eyes, and in a few moments they were sound asleep.

At dawn the next day, Prince Erian was the first to awake. But the beautiful Princess had disappeared. The young Prince, filled with mingled grief and astonishment, called out to his companions :

“Awake, my friends! Awake!”

“What is the matter, master? What is the matter?” they cried :

“An irreparable misfortune has befallen me! The Princess has disappeared! Search and see if you can find her anywhere.”

Long, Large, and the young Prince searched everywhere, examining every piece of furniture, but they did not find the beautiful young Princess.

“Alas!” they cried, “what shall we do? we are lost!”

“Wait!” said Keen Eyes; “not yet!” He had also been searching for the Princess.

“What!” exclaimed the young Prince, “can you have found her?”

“Yes,” replied Keen Eyes. “Four hundred leagues away there is a forest. In this forest there is a tree. On this tree there is a limb. On this limb there is an acorn.”

“Well—well?” cried Prince Erian.

“And in that acorn is the Princess.”

“Then all is lost!” exclaimed the young Prince. “To travel four hundred leagues and return by noon is an impossibility.”

“Do not give up all hope, my master,” said Long. “Wait a little while.”

Keen Eyes got on Long’s shoulders, and Long stretched himself out so that with a few leaps he was in the forest and then at the tree. Keen Eyes took possession of

the precious acorn. Long drew his great length together, and in a moment they had returned.

Prince Erian took the acorn, broke it open, and out stepped the Princess, more beautiful and more resplendent than ever.

All this time, Magor, the King of the Sorcerers, was laughing to himself and enjoying the neat trick he had played on the young Prince and his companions. At precisely twelve o'clock he presented himself at the door of the hall, and cried out :

“Ah, well ! faithful guardian ! Can you show me the beautiful Princess ?”

“Most certainly,” replied Prince Erian.
“Behold her here !”

A cry of rage broke from the Magician. A band of iron broke from his body and fell at his feet.

“But wait !” cried Magor. “Watch well to-night.”

“Be not uneasy,” said Prince Erian. “Meanwhile permit us to promenade in your magnificent garden.”

They inspected the palace from top to bottom and went through the garden. They saw some very strange things, and much that they saw was calculated to make a very serious impression on their minds. That which most affected the friends of the young Princess was the spectacle of a wall along which were ranged the statues of many Knights.

Some stood with clubs uplifted as if for combat. Others were in an attitude of supplication, while still others, with muscles strained and eyes filled with fire, seemed to be having a hand-to-hand contest with the terrible Sorcerer; but they had all been vanquished and turned to stone by his power.

“These unfortunate men,” said the

Princess, "have been transformed into statues for attempting to rescue me from the King of the Magicians. I have been the innocent cause of the misfortune of these brave men, and I bring misery to all who interest themselves in my sad fate."

"Then why do you not fly from this desolate palace?" Prince Erian asked. "Are you never free from this Magician? He has such power over you?"

"Alas!" replied the Princess, "I am not the mistress of my destiny, and when the King of the Magicians commands me I must obey. His power over me is boundless. He can change me into a bird that flies, into a grain of dust blown about by the wind, or into a flower that perfumes the garden. He can send me a million leagues away, and I can neither resist his caprice nor oppose his cruel

tyranny. Those who love me perish. He is so powerful, the others are so weak !”

“Ah, well !” exclaimed the Prince, “I shall not die, I will deliver you from the talons of this cruel vulture ! I will take you away from this castle, a thousand times accursed since it is your prison !”

“Alas !” said the Princess, “I fear that you also will suffer defeat. Are you a magician, are you a sorcerer, that you can contend against Magor ?”

“I am neither magician nor sorcerer,” replied the enthusiastic young Prince ; “but I have all the power of both, since I love you. Do not despair. Let me do as I wish. My friends, with their extraordinary gifts, are your friends, and they are devoted to your cause.”

“We will deliver you !” “We will de-

liver you!" exclaimed Long, Large, and Keen Eyes.

"May you succeed!" sighed the unhappy Princess. "But my hopes have been dashed to the ground so many times that I dare not depend on anyone."

All day long the young Princess of Golconda and Prince Erian walked together and were happy, forgetting for the time the terrible contest that was to take place, the outcome of which was wrapped in so much uncertainty.

Suddenly the Princess disappeared. Magor, the King of the Magicians, had called her.

The sun was disappearing little by little below the horizon, and its golden rays were fading before the approaching night.

All disconsolate, Prince Erian turned his steps toward the castle. His anxiety

for the Princess was extreme, but, with joyful surprise, he found her awaiting him at the door.

“Welcome, my Prince!” she said, and together they entered the castle.

An elegant repast was spread. The most delicate dishes, the most exquisite wines, burdened the table.

“Come, my friends!” cried the Sorcerer, “eat, drink, and be merry! This may be your last meal.”

“Don’t worry yourself, gentle sir,” answered Long. “To-morrow you may be kept busy in the kitchen again. Rest assured you will always find us in good health and with hearty appetites.”

“We shall see about that,” said Magor. “You found my prisoner in an acorn; you travelled four hundred leagues to bring her back to this palace; but all that is a very simple matter. To-morrow your task

will not be such an easy one. Am I not the King of the Magicians?"

"Just so," remarked Long; "but you are one and we are four."

When supper was over, the Princess was given into the care of Prince Erian.

"Good-night!" said Magor with a mocking smile. "Be sure that you watch more faithfully to-night, or the fair lady of your dreams will elude you."

"Make yourself easy," replied the Prince. "Should she escape we know how to find her."

When they arrived at the hall where the trial was to be renewed, the Princess said to her companions:

"I know that you are very powerful, but the cruel Magor is still more powerful. Redouble your precautions; remain awake and perhaps you may succeed in rescuing me."

"Trust to us," answered Prince Erian.

The most extraordinary precautions were taken, but all to no purpose. While Prince Erian and the Princess of Golconda were chatting together, sleep fell upon the small company little by little. The wicked Sorcerer had drugged their wine, and the effect was irresistible.

"Keen Eyes," said the Prince, drowsily, "are you awake?"

"Yes, my master," answered Keen Eyes with a yawn. "Fear nothing!"

But immediately his eyelids became heavy, and every effort he made to keep awake only made him sleep all the more soundly.

Magor, the King of the Magicians, found it an easy matter to carry off his lovely captive through a very small aperture that Large had left open when he fell asleep.

At sunrise Prince Erian awoke and dis-

covered that the Princess of Golconda had disappeared. He called to his companions :

“ Long ! Large ! Keen Eyes ! where are you ? Quick ! the Princess has disappeared ! This is our last day if we do not find her at once ! ”

They searched on all sides, but without success.

“ Do not distress yourself,” said Keen Eyes, to the young Prince, who was lamenting. “ See ! A thousand leagues from here—farther than the sea, farther than the mountains—there is a broad and waving field of wheat. In that field of wheat there is a ridge. On that ridge there is a stalk. On that stalk there is an ear. In that ear there is a grain. In that grain the beautiful Princess is hid.”

Once more Keen Eyes mounted the shoulders of Long, who stretched himself

again—stretched and took such long steps that in an hour's time he had crossed seas and mountains and reached the wheat-field. The two friends released the Princess from her floury prison, and in a short time were back at the castle.

Prince Erian had been awaiting their return, tortured by the agony of suspense. It is impossible to describe his joy in beholding once more the beautiful lady of his dreams. He laughed and sang and seemed almost beside himself. He could scarcely keep his eyes off the Princess even for a moment. Suddenly there came a knocking at the door.

Blam—blam ! Blam !

“Come in !” said the Prince Erian.

It was the King of the Magicians who entered. He smiled mockingly.

“Ah, well, my heroes !” he exclaimed, “are you as joyous to-day as you were yes-

terday at this hour, and can you present the Princess to me ? ”

“ It is my pleasure to do so,” said Prince Erian, with mock courtesy. “ Behold the Princess here ! ”

The Sorcerer grew pale with anger, and his eyes shot forth fire. A second band of iron fell from his waist and broke.

“ One day still remains, and this time we shall see who is the conqueror,” said Magor, furious with rage. Thus speaking he retired to an apartment in his palace, where he remained throughout the day, scheming to outwit Prince Erian and his companions. He now realized that he had met adversaries who were dangerous, and he knew that the contest of the next day would be final. What could he do to hide the beautiful captive ? At last he thought he had found a way and a sigh of relief escaped his lips.

Meanwhile Prince Erian and his companions were taking counsel together. They were filled with anxiety. They knew that the King of the Magicians would use all his art to carry off and conceal the beautiful Princess. They knew, too, that if they failed to find her their fate was sealed. They would take their places among the unfortunate knights who had been transformed into statues.

That night they took unusual precautions, but all was in vain, for when they awoke the next morning the Princess of Golconda had again disappeared.

“Awake, friends! Arise!” cried the young Prince, when he made the discovery. “The Princess is gone? Let us search for her.”

Long and willingly they searched, but all in vain. Keen Eyes himself was puzzled. He looked into the sky and on the

earth, penetrated the mountains, and looked into the bottom of the precipice. He could see nothing that resembled the beautiful young Princess.

“Ah, well!” cried Prince Erian. “The Sorcerer is stronger than we. This time we are lost.”

The sun was already high up in the heavens, and the time was approaching when the King of the Magicians was to make his appearance and demand the Princess.

But Keen Eyes did not despair. His keen glance searched everywhere. Suddenly he gave a cry of joy.

“Victory! victory! The Princess is ours! I have discovered her hiding-place.”

“Where is it?” cried Prince Erian. “Quick! Time is precious.”

“Do you see yonder—away yonder in

the Black Sea," said Keen Eyes, pointing as eagerly as if all eyes were as keen as his—"do you see that wave rocked by the hurricane, ascending to the surface and descending to the depths of the abyss, pushed here and thrown there by the storm? In the centre of that tremendous wave there is a void. In that void is a ring. In that ring is your beautiful Princess."

"What shall we do, my friends? What shall we do?" cried the young Prince.

"Large," said Keen Eyes, by way of answer, "get on Long's shoulders with me. He will take us to the shore of the sea where the storm-tossed wave is swimming."

Large obeyed, and at once and swiftly they made their way to the sea—swifter than the north wind they travelled, over plains and over mountains, past rivers and hills.

“Faster, faster!” cried Keen Eyes.

They reached the sea, but their difficulty was not over. How should they get possession of the storm-tossed wave? Long stretched himself and pursued it, but when he thought he held it, it would slip from his hands and disappear.

“Wait,” said Large. “I am going to get it.”

Then he began to drink, drink, drink, so rapidly that the wave with the void in its centre was at last brought within reach, so that the ring could be seized.

What an extraordinary sight it was to see a man as big as the thickest mountains, casting his shadow over the entire country, his head reaching beyond the clouds that floated in the sky. Large’s immense size can be imagined. He had been compelled to drink the greater part of the sea so as to get possession of the ring.

Having found the Princess at last, Long and Keen Eyes started on their return journey to the magician's castle.

But they had lost so much time trying to capture the ring that contained the Princess that the hour of noon was about to strike.

"Courage—courage!" cried Long. His immense strides carried him over hills and ravines, vast plains and dense forests. In a minute they will be at the castle. Forward! Quick! Fast and still faster.

"We are lost!" exclaimed Keen Eyes.

"No!" cried Long, "we are here!" He made a supreme effort, and, at one stride, reached the castle. As he came to the door, he saw the Magician about to enter.

"Let me pass!" demanded Keen Eyes.

"After me, if you please," said Magor.

“Infamous Sorcerer!” exclaimed Keen Eyes, “I must enter!”

“After me, I said,” responded Magor.

But while they were disputing Long threw the enchanted ring through the window, and when the King of the Magicians entered the hall, the Princess of Golconda, more beautiful than ever, received him.

The clock struck the hour of noon!

At sight of the Princess, the King of the Magicians trembled and a terrible cry burst from his lips. Then, transforming himself into a raven, he disappeared in space.

The third iron band had fallen from Magor’s waist and broken.

Meanwhile a marvellous change was taking place. The spell of the wicked Sorcerer was destroyed. The statues came to life. On all sides gay laughter and joyous songs could be heard, and one

might have thought that these people, Knights and Princes, were the invited guests at a wedding.

And so they were, for the marriage of the beautiful Princess of Golconda took place at once, and the guests were the Knights and Princes who had been restored to life. All of them took part in the festivities, and at daybreak they were still dancing in the Sorcerer's castle.

As soon as possible Prince Erian and his charming Princess turned their steps in the direction of that distant city where the aged King was waiting with impatience for his beloved son. Large had not yet returned, but Long went after him, and, all together, they wended their way toward the palace where Prince Erian first saw the light.

The joy of the Prince's parents cannot be described. They were never tired of

embracing their child. They overwhelmed him with questions, and then kissed and caressed him, and thus prevented him from talking. Nor was the beautiful Princess forgotten; each one embraced her, and received her as Prince Erian's wife should be received.

The festivities lasted many days, and when they were over, Long, Large, and Keen Eyes asked to leave the Prince.

"Why leave me?" said Prince Erian. "You know how much I owe you, and whether I love you. Remain with me always."

"No," replied Keen Eyes, "the palace stifles us, and the fine clothes we wear are uncomfortable. We are useless at this court."

"I will make you princes," said Prince Erian; "I will make you kings, if you will assist me in all my undertakings."

“Men of our kind,” said Long, “give kingdoms but receive none. At odd times, dear prince, we shall visit you. May we always find you happy and contented.”

Then bowing low to Prince Erian, Long, Large, and Keen Eyes sighed and disappeared.

XV

LOONY JOHN

WHEN Loony John was born, his mother leaned her head sadly on her hand and murmured :

“What will become of this boy later? Will he be wicked or innocent, rich or poor, intelligent or a simpleton?”

“He will be rich,” answered a little fairy. Her voice seemed to come from the rafters.

“He will be poor,” said a second one.

“Intelligent,” said a third.

Then a fourth voice made itself heard—
“Your child will never be anything but a simpleton.”

The unhappy mother recognized that

voice. She had heard it one day when she refused to take pity on an old beggar-woman, and now she knew that the woman was no other than the Queen of the Fairies in disguise.

The child grew and thrived, and when he was sixteen, his mother said :

“My son, I have many trials. We are poor and I want you to learn a trade. What do you want to do?”

“Nothing.”

“You do not want to work?”

“Oh, no,” answered Loony John; “work is tiresome.”

“Ah!” thought the poor mother, “the Queen of the Fairies is taking her revenge.”

Some days afterward the good woman needed a trivet, and sent her son to buy it.

Loony John ran to the city and bought

a splendid one, and was returning home contentedly, when he found that the trivet was too heavy. So he sat it down and addressed it :

“There is the road that leads to our home. You have three feet and I have but two. Run on ahead and be sure not to stop on the way, for my mother needs your services.”

Loony John put his hands in his pockets and went whistling along the road.

“Where is the trivet ?” demanded his mother when he reached home.

“Well, well !” exclaimed Loony John, “is it not already here ? The lazy thing must have lagged on the way. With its three feet it should have been here a good quarter of an hour ago.”

“Alas !” said the mother, “the trivet is lost. What a simpleton you are to talk to a piece of iron as if it had life. You

should have put it in your sack and carried it on your shoulders."

"Well, mother," answered Loony John, "another time I shall know what to do."

One day Loony John's mother concluded to celebrate the birthday of her oldest daughter, and some wine was needed for the invited guests, and Loony John was sent after it to a neighboring village. As he was returning, he remembered what his mother said about putting the trivet in a sack.

"Oh—ho!" he cried. "I was about to make a serious blunder. If I carry this wine to the house in a jug they will scold me. If a trivet should be put in a sack why not the wine!"

So he poured it into his sack.

"Where is the wine?" he was asked when he returned home.

"I had no sooner put it in the sack than it ran away on all sides."

"Did you not have a jug?"

"Certainly."

"What a misfortune!" his mother said.
"You should have carried it on your head."

Loony John said he would do better next time.

Not long after this, he was sent for a servant who had been engaged to watch the young turkeys.

"This time," said Loony John, "I shall be careful to make no mistake."

He soon found the servant, who was a young girl, and said to her:

"We have no time to lose. Let us be off. Come! get on my head and let's go."

"Oh, I thank you, sir," the young girl answered, laughingly. "You are too good. I can walk very well on my feet."

But Loony John was not to be put off in this way. He remembered that he had been told to carry the wine on his head, and as the new servant showed no inclination to obey him he gave her a terrible beating. She fell almost lifeless by the roadside.

“Oh—ho!” cried Loony John, “you think you will have me scolded again to-day ; but I am not so fond of a scolding, I can assure you.”

Without delay he placed the poor girl on his head and carried her home, where he arrived well-nigh exhausted.

“What is it you have there?” his mother cried.

“It is our new servant I bring you.”

“Oh, what an unhappy creature I am!” exclaimed the mother. She hastened to put the servant to bed. The poor girl’s arms were broken and her shoulders bruised.

During the fortnight that followed, Loony John was sent on no errands. But the servant girl grew steadily worse, and one morning the doctor had to be sent for. There was no one to go but Loony John, and accordingly he was sent.

"Ask for only one," his mother cautioned him.

"Have no fear," answered Loony John, and he went on his way yelling as loud as he could :

"Let only one come ! Let only one come !"

The road led by a river, and as Loony John was going along, he saw a fisherman who, since early morning, had been throwing out his line without success. Loony John's song did not please him.

"Silly scamp !" he exclaimed, "say 'Let a thousand come !' if you want to save your bones."

Immediately Loony John cried out :

“Let a thousand come ! Let a thousand come !”

He went on and came to a wood where a shepherd was struggling with a fierce-looking wolf. The contest seemed to interest him. He sat down quietly on a stone and awaited results.

The struggle was long and furious, but the man at last overpowered the beast, and the wolf fell mortally wounded. While the shepherd was recovering from his exertions he heard a strange refrain. Loony John was yelling :

“Let a thousand come ! Let a thousand come !”

The shepherd rose to his feet, furious.

“You young rascal ! Say, rather, ‘May the Imp seize him !’”

At once Loony John took up the new refrain and went on his way crying :

“May the Imp seize him! May the Imp seize him!”

Presently he met a funeral procession, but he still continued his cry.

“Will you hush?” said one in the procession. “If you must go yelling along the road, cry out, ‘May the Lord protect him!’”

Loony John was willing—none more so—and very soon the echoes were repeating :

“May the Lord protect him! May the Lord protect him!”

At the entrance of the village where the doctor lived, a house was on fire, and a crowd of people were trying to put it out. Some wicked person had set it on fire and he had been caught. He was safely tied, and those who were not helping to put out the fire were engaged in jeering and insulting the wicked incendiary.

Loony John also wanted to see the culprit, but for fear he would forget what he had been told to say, he kept on repeating :

“May the Lord protect him ! May the Lord protect him !”

The crowd was indignant, and on all sides were heard cries of “Here is his accomplice !” Immediately Loony John was seized and beaten, and, in spite of his tears and entreaties, was thrown into prison.

How he escaped need not be told. There is an old saying, “A fool for luck !” and it is a true one. Loony John got back home somehow.

Some time afterward Easter Sunday came, and when Loony John’s mother started to church she said :

“Above all things, don’t forget to put the hen in the stew-pan.”

“I will certainly do that,” he answered.

The good woman went off, leaving Loony John very much perplexed. He did not know which hen his mother wanted. So, after thinking the matter over, he went into the hen-house and said :

“Which one of you is to be cooked for dinner ?”

“Cluck — cluck — cluck !” answered a setting hen.

“Pshaw ! don’t talk Dutch !” protested Loony John ; “I can’t understand you.”

“Cluck—cluck—cluck !” said the setting hen.

Loony John was more puzzled than ever, but he repeated the question :

“Answer ! Which one of you is to be eaten for dinner to-day ?”

By this time the frightened chickens had all run out of the house into the garden, leaving only the old setting hen who had been answering Loony John in Dutch.

"Oh! you are the one! Very well!"

Loony John seized her and put her in the stew-pan alive. Then he began to think, and he remembered that the eggs were not hatched and that the nest was without a hen.

"My mother did not think of that," said Loony John, and at once he went and sat on the nest in the hen's place.

When his mother returned home she called for her son.

"John! Oh, John! where are you?"

"Here, in a corner of the hen-house!"

"Where?" exclaimed the mother. "I do not see you."

"Cluck—cluck—cluck!" said Loony John.

"Why don't you answer?" cried his mother.

"Cluck—cluck—cluck!" said Loony John.

His mother at last found him quietly sitting on the eggs.

"What are you doing there?" she asked, angrily.

"Sh—h!" replied Loony John. "Don't make any noise. I am setting."

"Did you put the hen in the stew-pan?"

"Cluck—cluck—cluck!"

"What do you mean by that?" inquired the good woman. "Speak!"

"I say that I am setting!" said Loony John, "and I will fly off the nest and scratch in the garden if you continue to disturb me in this manner."

"Why do you set?" his mother asked.

"Because the hen that sat on these eggs is about to boil."

"Why, that is not the hen that was to be cooked for dinner to-day, but the one that I picked yesterday and put in the

cupboard!" The good woman shook her head in despair and went away.

How long Loony John sat on the nest cannot be told, but one day, some time afterward, he was passing by a farm where he saw a woman picking a chicken and carefully placing the feathers to one side. Loony John was very much interested in this, and so he said to her :

"Please, ma'am, tell me what you are doing with those feathers?"

The woman was not without humor, and she replied :

"Why do you ask such a simple question? I am going to plant the feathers, of course. Doesn't your mother plant the feathers she picks from chickens?"

"My gracious! No!"

"Well, then, it is because she doesn't own any Catchmeddler hens."

“Why do you plant the feathers?” inquired Loony John.

“Well, well! your country must be a very poor place, young man. Is it possible you don’t know that one of these feathers, carefully cultivated, will yield each month a fat, frying-size chicken?”

“If that is so,” said Loony John, “sell me two hundred dollars’ worth of your largest and finest feathers.”

The woman laughed in her sleeve. She had never dreamed that an old hen could bring her so much money. She hastened to close the trade with Loony John, and, to show that she was not at all picayunish, she threw in the two feet of the old hen for good measure.

Loony John went on his way happy. When he reached home he got the hoe, went out into the garden, and began to plant his fine feathers.

“How everybody will admire my fine square of feathers!” he said to himself. “I will call to every passer-by and say, ‘Behold the beautiful hen-patch! Has ever such a wonder been seen before?’”

The next week, however, Loony John went all in tears to find the farm-woman.

“Well, well! my good young man!” exclaimed the woman when she saw him, “what do you cry for? Has your house been burnt?”

“That would be but a trifle,” replied Loony John.

“Alas! is your mother dead?”

“That would be an irreparable misfortune, but after awhile we should become reconciled.”

“What plague has fallen upon you?”

“The hail!” cried Loony John; “the hail that uprooted my beautiful chicken feathers. The wind also came among

them and scattered them over the country. Do not scold me! I have hunted for them, but I cannot find a single one."

"We should have thought about the possibility of a storm," said the shrewd woman. "It was not hens you should have cultivated, my young friend, but sausages—for sausages will withstand the wind and hail."

"But how would the sausages grow?" asked Loony John, drying his tears.

"Why, like apples and cherries; but the trees, instead of producing these fruits, bear beautiful sausages. People who are not educated think that sausages are only made by those who deal in meat. But surely you know better," said the shrewd woman.

Loony John tried to hide his astonishment.

"Who would be so simple-minded as

not to know that?" he replied. "For how much, ma'am, will you sell the sausages you speak of?"

"Twenty dollars apiece, if they are for yourself," answered the woman.

"I'll take a dozen," said Loony John, with the air of a fine trader. "I shall need no more to-day."

The shrewd woman brought Loony John a dozen old sausages and carefully wrapped them up. He paid for them on the spot, and then, forgetting his first misfortune—the wind and the hail—he returned home singing.

Loony John grew older as the days went by. A beard appeared on his face. He even took to himself a wife; but he still remained Loony John.

One day, when the sun was shining brightly, he dressed himself in his new suit of clothes, put on his best hat and

gloves, and went to the fair in the neighboring village. He enjoyed himself, and created a great deal of amusement for others by his queer blunders. In the afternoon the thought occurred to him that his wife would be expecting him at home, and so he started to return.

Unfortunately, a shower came up, just as he was crossing a bridge. Big drops of rain were falling on all sides. In a little while his fine hat, his new clothes, and his gloves that he was so proud of would be ruined.

"Goodness gracious!" cried Loony John, "if I suffer myself to get wet like this I shall be called a simpleton indeed, and my friends will have good cause to laugh at me. What shall I do?"

Suddenly he shouted for joy. A wonderful idea had struck him.

"I will throw myself in the river!" he

exclaimed. "Once in the water, it will be impossible for the rain to wet my clothes."

No sooner said than done. Into the water jumped Loony John. He couldn't swim and so he was drowned. The next day the miller found the body in the water. He drew it out, and Loony John was buried with great pomp. On his tombstone was an inscription in Latin, which, being interpreted, reads :

HERE LIES
LOONY JOHN
WHO
JUMPED INTO THE WATER
TO KEEP
FROM GETTING WET.

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